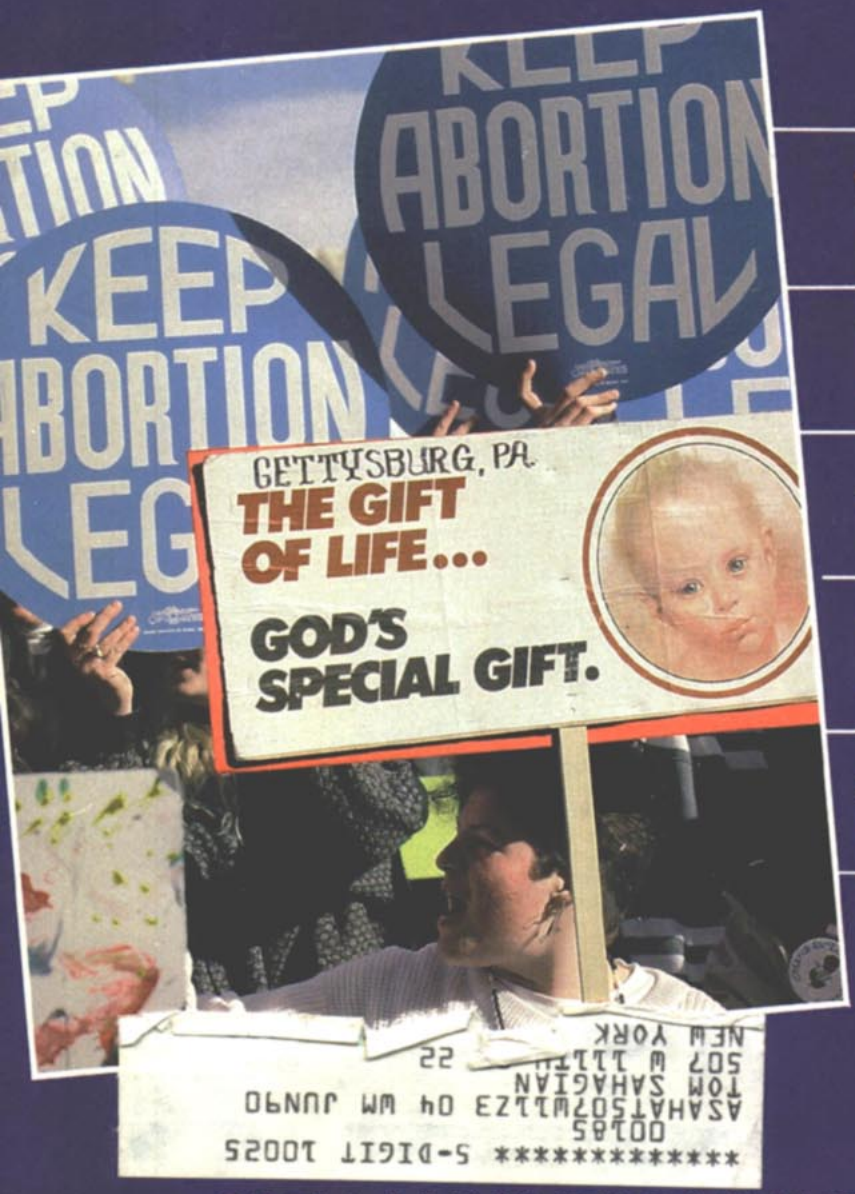
- How the FAA winks at drunk pilots
- Reviews by Tom Peters, Timothy Noah, Jim Naughton, and Matthew Cooper

The Washington Monthly

APRIL 1989/$3.00



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LETTERS

I, *Spy*

As *Spy* might have put it, "Well, do you like the magazine or don't you?" What puzzles me is why you and Jason DeParle ["Spy Anxiety," February] think reading *Spy* "lead[s] to more brain cells filling up with styrofoam thoughts on style and fewer left to think about things that matter?" I'm not sure I want any serious thinking done by brains so easily derailed.

PETER HIRSCH
Durham, North Carolina

I found it hard to believe that a magazine named *Spy*, or even a magazine named *The Washington Monthly*, could so intimidate "smart people" that they would be unable to think about and do "the things that count." After Jason DeParle's endless hand-wringing, I am prepared to grant *Spy*'s influence—on DeParle, at least. However, I am no longer able to think that the people being influenced are "smart." Having spent about 10 pages on *Spy* and three on "Making America Work," they look more like sheep—just fleeced.

TOM BIRD
Stanford, California

Those who "must" advance their careers by adhering to arbitrary fashion dictates are simply paying a lot for something they want too much. How much sympathy should we extend?

The obvious solution to "Spy Anxiety" is simply to think for oneself and choose one's company accordingly.

PAUL ROTHENSTEIN
Bellflower, California

If *Spy* picks up the gauntlet Jason DeParle threw down *Spy* will put you down as "out." But to be "in," New Yorkers will have to buy *The Washington Monthly* to get the joke—thereby making you "in."

MARJORIE ALLISON
Denver, Colorado

Your subscribers pay a fairly stiff premium in terms of editorial pages per subscription dollar to receive your magazine. We do so because we are interested in the political condition of our society. We seek illumination on the function or dysfunction of our political system.

I expect your editors to give full rein to their political hobby horses. I expect them to raise questions. To rake muck. To muster outrage. To float liberal alternatives. To abrade my own conservative socio-political sensibilities. To make me give a damn. . .and to make me think (and rethink).

I just don't think you can continue to meet my expectations if you are going to waste your editorial space on such trivial pursuits as "Spy Anxiety."

Please, Mr. Peters, pull up your socks and get on with the serious business of skewering politicians.

BILL ELISBURG
Pearl River, New York

Bank robbery

I have little sympathy for Jim DeParle's "Entrepreneur's Lament" ["My Banker Wouldn't Back My Building," January].

The loan officer in the piece should be commended for turning down the loan. Many brain-dead banks and S&Ls in the Sunbelt have financed timeshares and other real estate projects that involve selling or leasing the same property to multiple users. Unfortunately these multiple users have a tendency to default.

Given the high number of bankrupt banks and thrifts in this country, we should learn to appreciate conservatism from bankers, who are usually lending out federally-insured deposits. Deals that sound too good to be true usually are.

JOSEPH BLALOCK
Washington, D.C.

Thank you Barry much

Thanks to you and the *Monthly* for your important story, "The Worst City Government in America" [January]. You have documented why the crux of the matter in the District of Columbia is not the character of Marion Barry but the performance of his administration.

At the very least your story ought to put an end to any nonsense about the District of Columbia as the 51st state.

HAL RIEDL
Baltimore, Maryland

Be civil

I find it hard to understand why you would make such a derogatory statement about the ACLU as you did ["Tilting at Windmills," November]. It is possible and indeed quite probable that if it were not for the ACLU you would not be allowed to editorialize as freely as you do.

KARL I. HENNUM
Seattle, Washington

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Joe's crime

I have been a subscriber to *The Washington Monthly* since you sent out your first flag-draped issue in 1969, but this is my first letter in rebuttal.

Joe Nocera pleaded guilty, I believe, to a charge for which all of us would acquit him—loving his children ["The Case Against Joe Nocera," February]. But he ducked the charge which would really stick—undermining the people who really care to solve the problems he describes.

In a hideous and sweeping generalization Nocera claims that the condition of center city schools is due to the lack of *even a few* eloquent black voices. Where, according to Nocera, middle-class white liberals should be somewhat embarrassed, blacks should be *ashamed* at their failure to raise even a few voices.

But actually the single positive force for change in public education since the Sputnik took off has been *desegregation*. Perversely, this uniquely black cause with eloquent black leadership has been blamed for the white flight to the suburbs, thus resegregating our urban schools.

Throughout the country, voluntary enrollment plans and magnet schools—most of which were undertaken as part of court-ordered desegregation plans—have provided creative educational solutions that would never have been tried otherwise. We should be thankful we have at least this single lever to pry American education off center.

In light of this fact, here is my simple proposal: Put the newest schools with the best programs and the most motivated teachers working with the finest materials in the center cities. Then send your kids wherever you want. If you continue building those schools only in the suburbs and small, affluent, white towns, I already know where you will send your kids.

JOHN W. HAWLEY
Duluth, Minnesota

Puff on this for a while

I'm not impressed with all your bragging about how you won't print certain cigarette ads ["Letters," February]. In fact, I'm insulted. As a reader, I believe I can withstand all the glamorizing such ads supposedly do. What's the big deal? You regularly run articles which, if believed, would be much more harmful than any ad.

So how about this—you stop nobly turning down the millions the cigarette companies are begging to put in your pocket and print their ads; in every issue tell all readers who seriously think the ads are making them smoke more than they would otherwise (and not merely switch brands) to write in. For all those who write, as a public service (financed by all the new ad revenues), send them a large news packet explaining how dangerous smoking is and enclose pictures glamorizing the nonsmoking life. If three months later your susceptible readers still say they can't control themselves, then and only then may you stop printing cigarette ads. Until then, stop acting morally superior and censoring what you think your poor, dumb readers can't handle.

STEVEN KURTZ
Los Angeles, California

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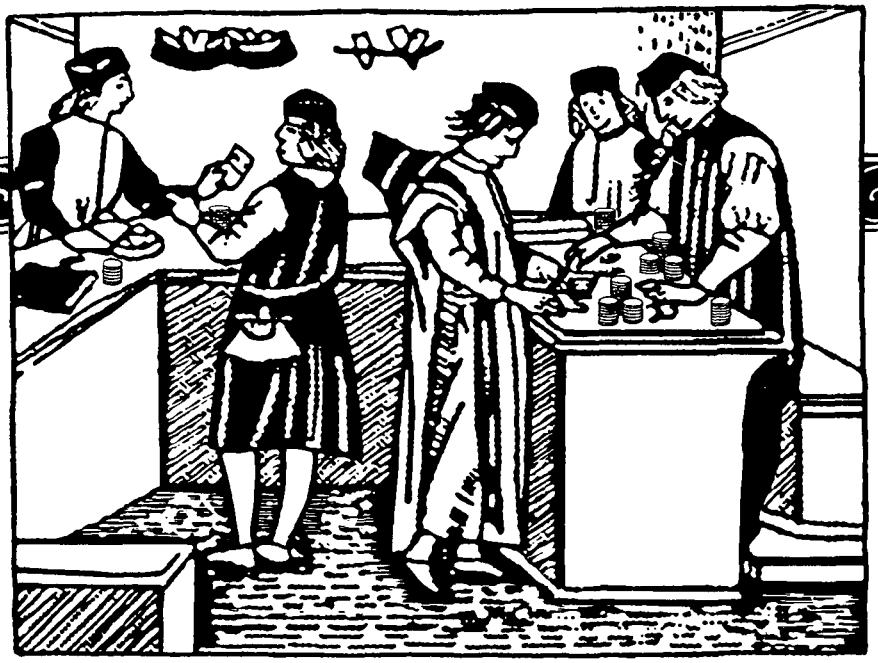

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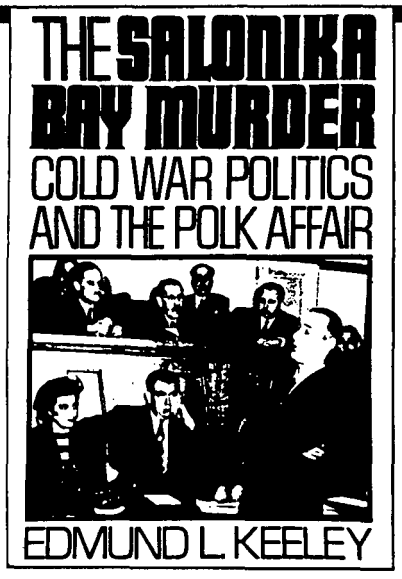

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The Washington Monthly

Volume Twenty-One, Number Three April 1989

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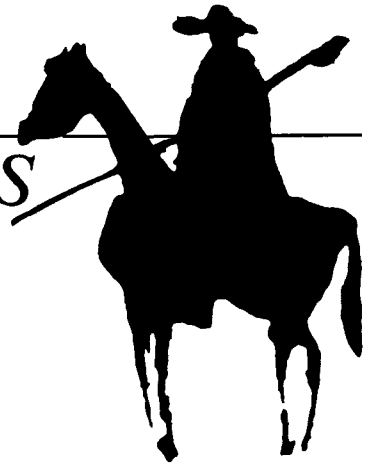
TILTING AT WINDMILLS



It used to be that Boeing was a name that meant quality. Now the company seems to be applying the principle of the automobile sun roof to modern aircraft design. If you're not delighted by the prospect of blue sky and fresh air as the skin peels back on your plane and you want to know what went wrong, you need look no further than this quote obtained by the *Seattle Times* from a Boeing assembly-line worker:

"They used to give you three planes to train a guy. On the first plane, he looks over your shoulder. On the second, you look over his shoulder. And on the third, he's on his own, but he can ask questions. Today, you get one plane.". . .

I'm worried about all those fax machines. Practically every office has one. The result I fear is that the chronic paranoia of American society will become exacerbated. It used to be that the time it took to deliver a letter provided a period during which anger could cool. When a Hot-Tempered Executive banged down his phone and fired off an angry letter to another Hot-Tempered Executive with whom he had just been talking, the other HTE would have a couple of days to calm down before the angry letter arrived. He might send a polite or even apologetic reply to the first HTE, who, also having had time to recover his equanimity, might be ready to look favorably upon a peaceful overture.

But now when the first HTE bangs down the phone and dictates his incendiary letter, he tells his secretary to fax it right away. The other HTE gets it while he's still hot—in other words when he is most likely to keep the dispute going by dictating a heated response to his secretary, who is of course told to fax it immediately. . . .

I am grateful to the Washington Stage Guild for its revival of George Bernard Shaw's *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles*. Although it is not one of the great man's great plays, it does state his view of the Last Judgment, which is mine too. It is that every day should be lived as if it were the day of reckoning. . . .

The Anaheim (California) City Council had a good idea but got carried away. It decided that the city should bill criminals for their trials and the cost of the police work that led to their arrest. But it made the ordinance apply to those found innocent as well as to those who are convicted. While that's practically certain to make it unconstitutional, the good part of the idea should not be forgotten. Indeed, it should be adopted by all the states and the federal government. Although some crooks don't have a dime, many have money, often because of their crimes, and it is right, at least after their victims have been compensated, for that money to be used to repay the government for the costs their misdeeds have caused it to incur. On the other hand, it seems to me that those acquitted not only shouldn't have to pay the cost of the prosecution, they should be

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reimbursed by the state for the cost of their defense.

All of which reminds me of an important point I haven't made recently: the best solution to court-clogging in the case of civil suits is to adopt a loser-pays rule with them as well. This is the rule in England, where it has worked well. People won't bring unjust suits if they know they're going to have to pay the defendant's costs if they lose. . . .

A recent survey of the members of the Maryland Bar Association provides additional evidence for a point often made in this column, namely that a lot of lawyers don't like what they're doing. This survey reports that one-third of the lawyers questioned are unhappy with their work and are considering leaving their profession.

I urge them to try teaching in the public schools, where people of their intelligence and ability are desperately needed. There appears to be, I'm delighted to say, something of a trend in this direction. According to the February 13 issue of *Time*, "a growing number of professionals are turning to teaching in mid-career, taking pay cuts and accepting sacrifices in order to pursue their late-found vocation."

The teachers' unions have long used the requirement of the education degree to discourage such mid-career transfers. But now 24 states have alternative certification programs that make it easier for the talented newcomer to break in. . . .

Last month I wrote about the free agency problem in baseball with a player like Claudell Washington switching teams seven times. This lack of loyalty to a team or to an institution, or even to a leader, has become commonplace in the eighties.

Consider the library of books critical of Ronald Reagan that has been created by his former subordinates at the White House. Wall Street is full of Claudell Washingtons. And in the law, as Saundra Torry and B.H. Lawrence pointed out in *The Washington Post* last month, "Gone are the days when partners remained loyal to one firm for life. Now the best and brightest are all too eager to make a switch."

Money is, of course, a major factor in the moves. But another, and I suspect even more important, factor is the way talented people think of themselves today. Personal autonomy, which was undervalued in the era of the organization man, may be overvalued today. There is, to be sure, no point in sticking with a bad law firm and there is undeniable good in having the public find out the truth about a president. But wouldn't we be better off working together to create institutions that we can be proud of, institutions to which we should be loyal?. . .

The federal bureaucracy, which has long been the leader in the creation of fancy titles for everyone, is in danger of losing its preeminence. The new contender for the world's title championship is the post-merger American corporation. The challenge that has led to this development is the problem of how to soothe the egos of the mergees who are ultimately going to lose out.

"STOP THEM DAMN PICTURES"

That's what "Boss" Tweed demanded when he saw the handwriting on the Hall (Tammany, that is). But the pictures didn't stop. "Boss" Tweed met his maker in the Ludlow Street Jail and Thomas Nast put bitingly eloquent political cartoons squarely and permanently in the middle of American political life. Tweed aside, we think Emerson had it right when he said, *"Caricatures are often the truest history of the times."*

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The merged corporations will, for example, end up with two comptrollers. One will remain the real thing. For the other, Jim Schacter of the *Los Angeles Times* reports that the title of the day is "vice president, operations analysis and planning.". . .

The Army has purchased special machines to clean its tanks and other battlefield equipment, at a cost of $16,000 per unit. Similar commercial cleaners can be bought for $2,000. What is so special about the Army's machine to justify the extra $14,000? The answer is that it is absolutely unique. It can't be used in peace or in war. It is undesirable for peacetime because the run-off it produces is environmentally hazardous. As for wartime, it makes so much noise that on a real battlefield it would reveal the location of our forces to the enemy. . . .

Further evidence for another point long made by this magazine comes from a study reported in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* that found that three out of five smokers being treated for alcohol or drug dependency said the cigarettes were harder to give up than alcohol or drugs.

The argument used by the tobacco companies to defeat a lawsuit by a lung cancer victim is that the cancer was the smoker's own fault because he chose to continue smoking in the face of death warnings on cigarette packs. But what if he became addicted before the warnings began to be published in the 1960s, so addicted that he was no longer free to choose to stop? This is the argument that can bankrupt the tobacco companies. So, lawyers, if you're still too greedy to go into teaching, here's something you can do to save your miserable souls. Thousands of lung cancer victims who became addicted before the surgeon general's warning first appeared die every year. Sue the tobacco companies on their behalf. You can do a good deed and get rich too. . . .

While I'm at it, I might as well update you on still another of our causes, the 55 mile per hour speed limit. We told you a couple of months ago about the increased injuries and fatalities in California after it raised the limit to 65. Now comes a report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration covering 48 states. In 38 states that raised the limit to 65, the rate of increase in fatalities from 1986 to 1987 was nearly three times as high as in the 10 states that kept the limit at 55. . . .

One more sign that at least the more ostentatious forms of greed are going out of style is the declining number of luxury cars being sold in this country. According to *The New York Times*, sales of Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, BMW, Saab, Volvo, Jaguar, and Audi automobiles have fallen in the past two years. . . .

The District of Columbia, as everyone knows, is in the midst of an epidemic of crime. It's worst by far in the city's poorer neighborhoods. Yet in the poorest area, the 6th district, there are only 262 police officers, while there are 414 in the 2nd district, which includes Georgetown and other affluent parts of the city west of Rock Creek Park. The rich area is also where almost all of the 995 members of the Uniformed Division of the Secret Service stand around or sit in squad cars in front of embassies, doing practically nothing all day, as this magazine has twice pointed out (see "The Executive Protection Racket," Howie Kurtz, October 1978, and "Why Washington's Best Cops Walk Its Safest Beat," Matthew Cooper, April 1988).

What should be done—and Congress has the power to do it—is transfer these underemployed officers into the city police force and put them in the heavy crime districts. They happen, as Cooper pointed out, to be among the best-trained law enforcement personnel in the nation. They should be assigned to walking beats, as should most of the regular District police. The air-conditioned squad car, by insulating its occupants from street-smart knowledge of the people in the neighborhoods, has become the greatest friend the criminal ever had. . . .

Speaking of our wonderful city government, the District has only 22 paramedics assigned to ambulance duty. The city of Baltimore, with only a slightly larger population and with much less tax revenue than the District, has more than 130. . . .

If you had to pick which of five countries—Canada, Britain, West Germany, Sweden, and the United States—has the highest percentage of children living below the poverty line, which would you choose? The United States of course. And, of

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course, you would be right. Have we become so accustomed to our shameful record that we've come to accept it as a kind of given, something we know but which nothing can be done about?. . .

All of us admire the skill and heroism of the United pilot who safely guided that 747 back to Honolulu. Unfortunately, as David Nather suggests in the article beginning on page 12 of this issue, not all the fellows in the cockpit are as well suited to their tasks. Take the two pilots of Continental Express (a commuter line) Flight 2286, which crashed on an instrument-landing approach to Durango, Colorado last year. One was coming off a cocaine high. His copilot, according to the National Transportation Safety Board, had a record of deficiencies in performing instrument landings. The pilot had lost his driver's license in Florida because of traffic convictions and had then been convicted of eight moving violations in Colorado in a space of just four years. He had also twice been disciplined for letting a passenger board his plane while a propeller was spinning.

Even these fellows might have avoided the Durango crash had their plane been equipped with a ground proximity alarm, which would have given them a 29-second warning to pull up before they hit the ground. For three years previous to this crash, the safety board had been telling the FAA that it should require this warning system in commuter airlines—the first time was in 1985, after a Maine crash in which eight people died. Between that accident and the one in Durango, there were, according to David Field of *The Washington Times*, two other crashes that might have been prevented by the warning device. The FAA still did nothing. Finally it has announced that it will act "later this year.". . .

The Pentagon has been telling us there is a severe shortage of tritium, which is needed in nuclear weapons and has been produced in only one facility, the Savannah River reactor complex, which has been shut down for safety reasons. For this reason there has been pressure to rush Savannah River back into production. Now it develops that the Energy Department has been selling tritium to private corporations and research groups, both here and abroad, for decades and is *continuing* to do so. . . .

The Internal Revenue Service is supposed to send photocopies of returns to taxpayers who request them and pay the required fee for the service. Twenty-one percent of the fees have had to be refunded because the IRS can't find the returns. The state of its files is suggested by a recent audit of 11 record centers that reports, "In most record centers we found W-2 forms scattered on the floor.". . .

Not long ago, as I was leafing through a Sunday edition of *The Washington Post*, I was delighted to see a headline, "Ready or Not: Cut Pentagon Readiness Spending." I was delighted because I thought it meant that the accompanying article would expose the little-known con game hidden in the Pentagon's "operations and maintenance" budget. The article turned out to be about something else entirely. But it reminded me to remind our readers about those games. Because the Pentagon realizes that a congressional vote to subtract anything from the operations budget will sound like a vote against readiness and motherhood, it tends to stick items under O&M that it doesn't want scrutinized. The last time we looked at it ("Thirty-Five Ways to Cut the Defense Budget," Phil Keisling, Jonathan Alter, April 1982), it included items like the salaries of such dubious Pentagon bureaucrats as the 1,500 public information and public relations specialists and 10,000 personnel managers, not to mention subsidies for all those commissaries and post exchanges that are now needed only at the few truly isolated military bases, and such other essentials as reseeding base golf courses and paying for the secretary of defense's private dining room. . . .

Did you know that New Jersey parents are going to get a new kind of report card from their schools? It will report not on the student but on the school, showing how it is performing in comparison to other schools in the state. This strikes me as a splendid idea, which I hope other states will quickly adopt. . . .

The New York State Board of Regents has struck a blow against mindless credentialism. It rejected a proposal by the State Board of Education to require librarians in towns of fewer than 7,500 people to have master's degrees in library science. The education department also wanted to

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require all the libraries to have computerized information retrieval. The citizens of the small communities served by those libraries might just prefer to spend their money on good books, just as they might prefer to keep old Mrs. Jones as librarian because she knows books and cares for them lovingly even though she's never been near a school of library science. . . .

I agree with "Who's Who" (see page 17) that the shortage of media outrage about James Baker's Chemical Bank stock can be attributed to reporters' desire not to injure or anger one of their best sources. Certainly the story has not been pursued by the big shots of the Washington press, who are especially dependent on Baker. The only articles that I have seen that were seriously critical of Baker were by C. Robert Zelnick on the op-ed page of *The New York Times* and Stephen Kurkjian in *The Boston Globe*. It may, I should concede, be something more than pure self-interest that is motivating the media's heavyweights in this case. There may be a hint of patriotism involved. Most of the top reporters and their editors and publishers think Baker is a competent man, perhaps even the most competent among Bush's appointees. They don't want to see his influence diminished by scandal.

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Many people, having read Taylor Branch's *Parting the Waters*, will tell you how much we need another Martin Luther King today. They are right of course. But even more, I think, we need King's forerunner at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Vernon Johns. Johns could make his congregation, the black elite of Montgomery, nervous when he wore muddy shoes or sold fish and watermelon on the side. He upset them even more with his attacks on their attachment to status and privilege above work.

"He accused them of persisting in the white man's view of slavery—that labor was demeaning—when Negroes should know that it was oppression not labor that demeaned them. On the contrary, the desire to avoid labor had enticed whites into the corruption of slavery."

"He named," Branch continues, "the Alabama State business professors and challenged the congregation to name an actual business to which any of them had ever applied himself. Business was beneath them, Johns said derisively. And farming was too dirty. In order to make something worthwhile they would have to take risks and immerse themselves among the common people, and this, he said, was the step they were least willing to take."

Most members of the black elite continue to prefer the safety of prestigious jobs in the professions or large corporations to the risks of entrepreneurship, which could provide jobs and opportunities for other blacks. And because the black elite is much larger today, the problems Johns described are much worse. And because too many of their former white oppressors, whom they still emulate, continue to value status and prestige above work, this country is losing the international economic competition.

And because too many members of the black and white elite are too preoccupied with climbing higher on the status ladder, they are all failing to lend a helping hand to those down below.

Johns had another bone to pick with snobbery at his church. The organist looked down on the spirituals Johns loved. I was similarly tormented at the First Presbyterian Church in Charleston, West Virginia, by a series of choir directors who were choosing hymns that demonstrated their good taste instead of the rousers I loved, like "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" and "Lead On Oh King Eternal." . . .

—*Charles Peters*

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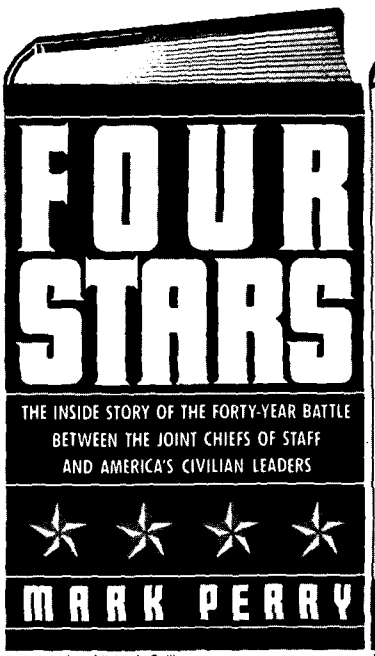

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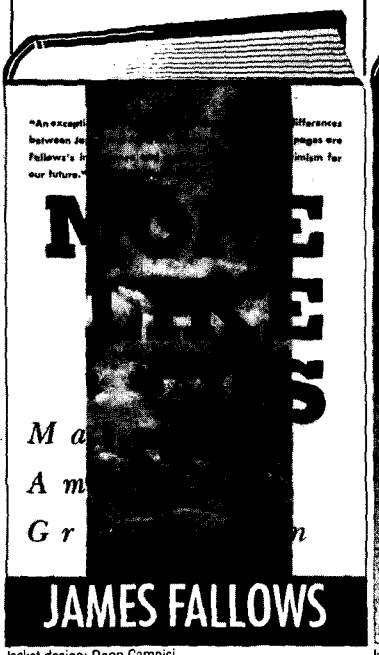

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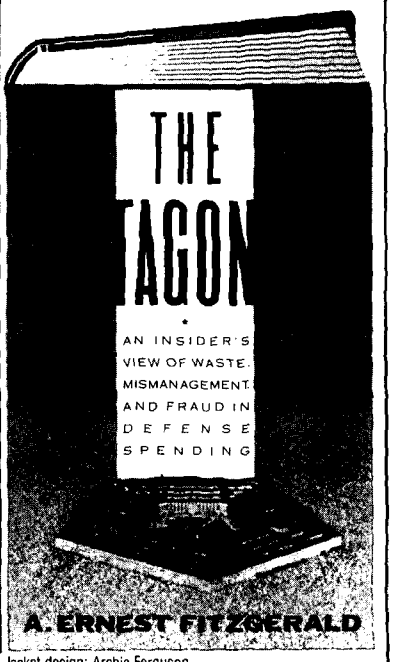

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Have One for the Runway

How Transportation Department policies add new meaning to the word "red-eye"

by David Nather

On August 1, 1982, Larry W. Morrison, a pilot for Northwest Airlines, was scheduled to copilot an early-morning flight out of Las Vegas. He'd been in the city for two nights, having copiloted a flight in from Minneapolis on July 30. He was staying at the Hilton Flamingo Hotel during the layover.

During the 30 hours he was in Las Vegas, Morrison was not immune to the city's charms. He drank a beer, two double vodkas, a liter of wine, and two pints of vodka straight from the bottle. He finished off the last quarter-pint of vodka as soon as he woke up at 4 a.m.—less than four hours before he was scheduled to climb back in the cockpit.

As his flight crew gathered in the lobby of the Hilton Flamingo, Morrison had John Dill, the flight's captain, paged. I'm too sick to fly, he told Dill. Dill called the airline's scheduling office to try to find a new copilot, but he was told that no one was available so early in the morning. If Morrison couldn't fly, the flight would have to be canceled.

It didn't take long for airline officials to change their minds. As the flight crew boarded the plane, the Northwest station agent at the airport noticed Morrison wasn't looking too good. He told Donald Nelson, Northwest's general manager in Minneapolis, who ordered the plane to stay on the ground. But by the time Nelson's order was received, Northwest Flight 81, a Boeing 727 with 73 passengers and six crew members—including copilot Larry W. Morrison—was already in the air.

Northwest, having found a copilot, took Morrison off the plane during a stopover in San Francisco, and gave him a blood test. Morrison's blood alcohol level was 0.13 percent, well above the 0.04 percent level that the Federal Aviation Administration defines as being under the influence. Northwest fired Morrison for breaking the FAA's, as well as its own, rules against alcohol abuse. Now, after six years of court battles, the airline has been forced to take him back.

It boggles the mind. Here is a pilot who had slipped deep into the clutches of alcoholism, and neither the FAA nor his airline knew it. When the airline finally wised up and fired him, it couldn't make its own decision stick.

So how do we keep the Larry Morrisons from risking our lives? Increasingly, transportation officials have been moving toward random testing—giving a surprise urinalysis or blood test to catch abusers and to deter others from getting smashed. Just after the November elections, the Department of Transportation announced that it would require commercial air operators and other transportation companies to test workers in safety-related jobs for five kinds of illegal drugs.

David Nather is a reporter for the Dallas Morning News.

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A wise move. While few people have had their lives threatened by intoxicated reservation clerks, drunk pilots are a cause of greater concern. But the new DOT plan wouldn't have kept Larry Morrison's boozy breath out of the cockpit that summer morning. It doesn't call for testing for alcohol or for tranquilizers, muscle relaxants, or any other prescription sedatives that can affect a pilot's reflexes and judgment just as severely as illegal drugs. The DOT's failure to ground drunk pilots is a classic illustration of poor regulation. It also illustrates the failure of courts and unions to protect our safety.

Take my word, please

It's not that the department is so lax that it lets you fly a plane with a beer in one hand. If you were to apply for a job as an airline pilot today, you'd be presented with a set of rules on alcohol and drugs, legal as well as illegal. You'd be told of Federal Aviation Regulation 91.11, the FAA's ban on flying within eight hours after drinking alcohol, while under the influence of alcohol, or "while using any drug that affects faculties in any way contrary to safety." An airline's own rules may go beyond that; Northwest, for example, won't let you fly within 24 hours of your last drink.

These restrictions make sense, but when it comes to enforcement there's a problem. Right now most airlines will test you, Joe Pilot, for alcohol or drugs before you are hired. But when the FAA is handing out licenses, it isn't nearly so fussy. Instead of conducting tests itself, it relies on doctors certified as experts in "aviation medicine." (This is not such a big deal; many physicians have such training.) So for Joe Pilot this means finding a physician certified in aviation medicine. The doctor does give Joe an exam, but he's not required to administer a blood or liver function test for drugs and alcohol. Instead, he takes Joe's word for it. The pilot just fills out a form and hands it to the doctor. The forms are unambiguous: items to be checked include "currently use any medication (including eyedrops)," "any drug or narcotic habit," and "excessive drinking habit." Once you've filled out the form and the examiner has approved it, you're set.

If, on the off chance the FAA stumbles onto something that suggests you've lied on your form, then you might be asked for a clarification. But as Dr. Keith Russell, manager of the medical review branch of the FAA's Civil Aeromedical Institute in Oklahoma City, says: "Generally, we have to rely on what the pilot has put down, particularly because he has signed the form." *Oh, well, as long as he signs it!*

Like most systems of self-enforcement, this one doesn't work. In 1987, the Department of Transportation inspector general's office checked the National Driver's Register to find out whether any FAA-certified pilots had forgotten to mention any drunk-driving convictions under "record of traffic convictions." Nearly 8,000 pilots had overlooked that little detail. That's 8,000 convicted drunk drivers with pilots licenses. Worse, there were 10,300 pilots in all with DWI convictions listed in the registry—

> In 1987, the Transportation Department checked to see whether any certified pilots had forgotten to mention any drunk-driving convictions. Nearly 8,000 pilots had.

meaning the FAA certified more than 2,000 pilots with full knowledge of their drunk-driving records. Not surprisingly, the inspector general of the DOT criticized the FAA for relying on the honor system and for not having set objective standards, even for DWI convictions, on how to revoke an alcoholic pilot's license.

Having taken its lumps from the inspector general, the FAA seems to be getting tougher. It's drafting rules to allow it to revoke licenses of alcoholic pilots, and it's working on a system to examine driving records to check for DWI convictions. But for prescription tranquilizers and sedatives, the FAA is still content to rely on the old scout's honor.

What to do instead? It's pretty hard to get past the honor system problem—except through testing. Again, pilots for most of the major airlines can already expect a test when they are hired. And they can be somewhat deterred by testing when supervisors feel there is probable cause—although this assumes that supervisors have the time and the knowledge to spot an alcoholic and the gumption to order him to take a test. But with the exception of Eastern and United, most airlines still don't test for prescription tranquilizers or sedatives. And even if they did test for alcohol and illegal drugs, they might run into another problem: the courts.

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The Air Line Pilots Association didn't waste any time coming to Larry Morrison's defense. Shortly after the firing, ALPA appealed on his behalf to Northwest's own in-house arbitration board with an interesting defense: Morrison's recklessness, the union said, was "the unavoidable consequence" of alcoholism. "One of the hallmarks [of alcoholism] is denial," explained John Mazor, a spokesman for the pilot's union, "and that is a symptom of the disease just as cirrhosis of the liver is a symptom of the disease." In other words, ol' Larry wasn't reckless on purpose, so don't fire him. Northwest's policy, by contrast, left no room for excuses: let the pilot keep his job if he admits to his alcoholism and goes through rehabilitation. The arbitration board, however, didn't see it that way. It ordered Northwest to rehire Morrison.

Then the courts stepped in. First, a federal district court sided with Northwest, saying that arbitrators had no authority to second-guess Morrison's contract, which clearly stated that anyone who walks into a cockpit less than 24 hours after drinking can be fired. But a federal appeals court then reversed that decision, saying the federal district court had no standing to second-guess the arbitrators. And the Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Morrison is now back at the controls.

ALPA insists that alcoholism should be treated just like any other disease, in which denial is a symptom just like a rash or a tumor. This is not an entirely specious argument, of course. But the question is one of priorities: the safety of the pilot's job vs. the safety of the traveling public.

Take a 'lude, dude

From 1978 through 1987, the National Transportation Safety Board investigated 6,175 fatal air accidents. Of these, 33 were classified as drug-related, *while 299 were alcohol-related.* (To be fair, keep in mind that no major airline accident since 1964 has been found to be alcohol- or drug-related. Of course, that may be partly due to the fact that Larry Morrison didn't crash.) That so many of these crashes involved drunk pilots flying private planes is hardly reassuring. As has happened several times—the PSA catastrophe over San Diego in 1978 comes to mind—those relatively unsupervised private pilots can fly into *you* even when they're sober.

What about prescription drugs and crashes? Amazingly, the FAA keeps no records on pilots using potentially impairing prescription medications while flying. It would make sense for the FAA to keep tabs as well on how many pilots' license applications have been denied or delayed because of the use of a potentially dangerous medication. The National Transportation Safety Board seems just as incurious. Its statistics on drug-related accidents don't distinguish between legal and illegal drugs.

Given the lack of evidence, why should any passenger worry about the pilot taking too many prescription drugs? They wouldn't let a guy fly who's been knocking back codeine and Valium, right? Unfortunately, the implications of a 1985 Delta Airlines crash, and the issues that have surfaced in the resulting liability trial, won't soothe any anxieties.

> Before the pilot crashed, the doctor gave him prescriptions for all kinds of drugs that would leave you too drowsy to do the dishes, let alone fly a plane.

Captain Edward M. "Ted" Connors was in command of Delta Flight 191 on August 2, 1985, when, on final approach to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, his L-1011 flew underneath a small thunderstorm hovering over the edge of the runway. A microburst—a violent torrent of wind and rain—caught the plane and slammed it to the ground. The crash killed 137 people, including Connors. From that day on, friends and associates have wondered how Connors could have allowed the airliner to fly into such a violent storm—unless it took him and the rest of the flight crew by surprise. But how could he have been surprised? They remember him as a cautious, dedicated pilot who scrupulously avoided weather that could jeopardize his passengers' safety.

Then the crash victim's attorneys subpoenaed his medical records. Connors, as it turned out, had filled at least 15 prescriptions for the powerful tranquilizer Stelazine during the three years prior to the crash. Whether he took any pills the day of the crash, or whether the drug would have so fried his brain that he couldn't recognize a thunderstorm, is an issue that divided the medical experts who testified at the trial. What is indisputable is that Connors never bothered to tell the FAA about any of the prescriptions, even though the honor system required him to do so. Had he and 136 other people not died, it's

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doubtful that his use of Stelazine would ever have been uncovered.

Is it possible that no one warned Connors that it might not be safe to take Stelazine while flying an airliner full of people? It's very possible. The FAA doesn't even have a list of banned drugs to hand out to its own medical examiners, let alone to the airline pilots who show enough initiative to check which drugs are safe and which are not. Instead, said Russell, the FAA doctor, when the pilot has a question about a particular medication he is expected to ask the medical examiner. Yet even that doesn't always work. Connors was regularly certified by a Miami medical examiner, Dr. Charles Mummery, who gave him prescriptions for all kinds of drugs that could leave you too drowsy to do the dishes, let alone fly a plane: the sedatives Valium and Dalmane, and the muscle relaxant Anaprox. In his deposition, Mummery suggested that he isn't the only medical examiner who takes such liberties. "There are a lot of different things taken under a variety of different circumstances," he said. "and. . .I don't know that we obey the letter of the law all the time about these things."

> Like most systems of self-enforcement, the Transportation Department's doesn't work.

Bad breath

What makes the problem of drugs and alcohol in the skies even more infuriating is that there was a way out of the mess. In 1987, Senators John Danforth and Ernest Hollings cosponsored a bill requiring random testing for alcohol and controlled substances. The bill died in a Senate-House conference committee, leaving enforcement up to the Department of Transportation.

The senators' aides, who declined to be identified, were not exactly impressed by the DOT's commitment. One told me about a meeting he and other senate aides had with DOT staff members just before the bill went down in flames. The DOT staff members said they liked it—except for the alcohol testing. They asked the Senate aides to take it out, saying it would be "too difficult to administer."

It's a familiar excuse, and a flimsy one. The FAA's official reason for not supporting random alcohol testing, as published in the *Federal Register*, was that the ineffectiveness of a urinalysis alcohol test would mean that a blood test and breathalyzer test would have to be administered—making the testing program too expensive. Not that drawing blood or breath for an alcohol test has ever been a problem for the Federal Railroad Administration—or, for that matter, for the airlines themselves. (Neither have random testing yet, but they do have probable cause testing for alcohol.) "Also," the FAA explanation continues, "the blood test method generally is considered an invasive procedure and would not be favorably received by those being tested." As opposed to, say, drug testing?

Why would the FAA resist alcohol testing? Chalk it up to a narrow mind-set that tolerates legal drugs but not illegal ones. "The reason we're testing for illegal drugs is that we know they shouldn't be using [illegal] drugs at any time," said Dr. Barton Pakull, chief psychiatrist at the FAA's Office of Aviation Medicine—as if that's what the airline passengers are *really* worried about. ("I can't believe we just flew into this mountain. I wonder what that pilot's on." "Yeah. Hope it's not anything illegal.")

That there has been no clamoring for alcohol testing is another example of political gridlock in Washington. Aside from a handful of public interest groups, there's simply no lobby banging the drums for more testing. Certainly the Air Line Pilots Association is not going to demand, "Dammit, if you're going to test us for drugs, test us for everything." Fortunately, Danforth and Hollings have reintroduced their random testing bill. And Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner, a former prosecutor, seems to have little tolerance for the have-one-for-the-runway attitude. In a speech to FAA employees at Chicago's O'Hare airport in February, Skinner declared: "We're not going to let cocaine users or alcohol users in the cockpit."

That's the kind of thinking the Department of Transportation needs—and should have had all along. If random testing is to succeed, it's got to cover Coors as well as cocaine, Stelazine as well as speed. The FAA's Dr. Pakull defends the current program this way: "I think you can understand from an administrative standpoint that the perception of safety is as important as safety itself." Then again, there's something to be said for safety itself. □

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WHO'S WHO

James Baker's protected status as the favorite source of the Washington press corps has never been better illustrated than by the story of his $2.9 million worth of stock in Chemical National Bank. By agreeing to sell the stock, he has apparently put an end to the faint murmurs of media criticism that have been stirred by the disclosure of his holdings in January. But what concerns us is that he was secretary of the treasury, making policies that favored major banks, while he concealed his substantial holdings in one of them. If a **Bert Lance** or an **Ed Meese** had been guilty of the same thing, there would have been editorials demanding his head, followed by a congressional investigation and the appointment of a special prosecutor.

It is possible, however, that Baker's honeymoon with the press may be endangered by his current attempt to run the State Department through **Margaret Tutwiler** and a handful of other aides he has brought in with him. This has antagonized the foreign service, which is itself extremely well connected with the media and has been busily spreading stories of discontent....

The real reason **Craig Fuller** was not given a top job in the administration is that **George Bush** suspected him of being the number one source of **David Hoffman** of *The Washington Post*, and George Bush hates Hoffman. **Owen Ullman**, the reporter who let this cat out of the bag is not, it should be noted, one of Hoffman's devoted admirers. In fact, he and Hoffman are said to have come close to fisticuffs during the recent campaign....

The consensus here is that Bush's three major mistakes are named **Quayle**, **Tower**, and **Sununu**. Sununu has yet to gain the notoriety of the other two, but it will come. Just two nights before the Tower vote, Sununu assured White House colleagues that all Senate Republicans, including **Nancy Kassebaum**, would support Tower. Kassebaum had told Bush the week before that she would oppose Tower. Perhaps Sununu can pin the blame on **Rhett Dawson**, the head of the Pentagon transition team, who had told the White House in early January that the nomination was "fixed" and that there was nothing to worry about....

If Sununu self-destructs, it won't, insiders say, be the fault of his deputy, **Andy Card**, who is considered one of the administration's brightest young prospects. Others in that category include **Bob Grady** at OMB and **Ron Kaufman** at the White House. Kaufman, you will remember, was the mastermind of Bush's Boston Harbor appearance and of the endorsement of Bush by the Boston police....

There appears to be a chance that the policy of reckless deregulation followed by the Reagan administration may be abandoned by the Bush team. Three of its most important potential regulators—**James Watkins** of Energy, **Samuel Skinner** of Transportation, and **William Reilly** of the EPA—have at least been talking a tougher line than was customary with their predecessors who served with Ronald Reagan....

C. Boyden Gray, the White House counsel, is said to be close to George Bush. That may turn out to be important, for it appears that he is going to need a friend in high places to save his job. He has already alienated a powerful columnist, **William Safire**, and the most powerful cabinet member, James Baker....

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Where the Boys Are

How a well-intentioned civil rights law and a dose of chauvinism shoved women administrators out of college sports

by Matthew Goodman

One day last February, George Bush took some time out to celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day. At the White House, the new president gave Olympic sprinter Evelyn Ashford an award and received a gold-plated horseshoe from jockey Julie Krone.

As such high-viz events suggest, this is a time of unprecedented growth and excitement within women's sports. But a closer look reveals that there's an unprecedented problem too: although female athletes have become increasingly visible, women *coaches* and *administrators* are increasingly scarce. It's just like black athletes: in general, they run plays, but not much else. After all, Big Sports is Big Business, where women are rarely in control.

A study done by two Brooklyn College professors reveals some interesting facts: in 1972 more than 90 percent of women's teams' coaches were female; by 1988 that number had dropped to only 48 percent. In 1972, more than 90 percent of women's athletic programs were headed by a female administrator; today it's only 16 percent. In fact, women hold only 29 percent of all administrative positions within women's athletic programs, and 32 percent of women's athletic programs *have no women administrators at all*. And the irony is that the overriding factor in creating this situation was the passage of the bill designed to outlaw gender discrimination on campus.

Matthew Goodman is a freelance writer in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 barred sex bias "in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Its passage was hailed as a major victory for the women's movement, and one of Title IX's immediate consequences was that many colleges and universities merged their men's and women's athletic programs. The thinking was that sharing staffs and resources would be a significant step towards equality (not to mention saving on administrative costs).

However, at every school in the country where this kind of departmental merger occurred, the head of the men's athletic department became athletic director and the head of the women's athletic department became his assistant. Women who had once run their own departments, overseeing budgets, scheduling, and hiring, now saw those responsibilities pass solely to men. As Christine Grant, the director of women's athletics at the University of Iowa, puts it, "When the programs merged, the women were submerged."

Then and now, men have tended to offer three major reasons for dominating athletic programs:

Women do not have as much relevant experience as men in running large athletic departments. Andy Geiger, Stanford's athletic director for the past 10 years, subscribes to this view: "The women's athletic director did not have to deal with major fundraising, large financial decisions, TV contracts, and very difficult, very public personnel decisions." Eileen Livingston, athletic director at Duquesne University agrees, but adds, "Women haven't been given the

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opportunity to learn, just like the men learned on the job when TV came on the scene. Give us the opportunity to do it, and we can do it as well."

Men's sports bring in the bucks. Traditionally, the two major money-makers among college sports have been football and men's basketball. They are, in the words of one male athletic director, the "cash cows." They bring visibility, gate receipts, and TV money. And according to several women in sports administration, many college presidents believe that a female athletic director could not run a competitive sports program. "Many men don't believe that women could find the best coaches," says Donna Lopiano, director for women's sports at the University of Texas. "Or maybe they don't believe that the best coaches would agree to work for a woman."

Women should not oversee the football program. This is the always unspoken—but apparently powerful—rationale for keeping women out of the upper levels of college sports administration. Among the major college sports, football is the most exclusively male preserve, and there are potent forces acting to keep it that way.

Close but no cigar

As Lynn Imergoot, the assistant athletic director at Washington University, sees it, a woman applying for the position of athletic director is at an immediate disadvantage, "because she won't ever be able to smoke cigars with the football glad-hands."

When Charlotte West was named acting athletic director at Southern Illinois University in 1987, she thought she had a pretty good shot at the permanent job. She had, after all, been in sports administration at Southern Illinois for more than 30 years, first as the director of women's athletics, and then, after the men's and women's programs merged, as associate athletic director. But last July, the university announced that former St. Louis Cardinal quarterback Jim Hart would be the new A.D. Charlotte West had been passed over.

This episode is well-known to female sports administrators because the disparity in experience—Hart had never previously held *any* sort of significant administrative position—was so glaring. But in announcing the Hart appointment, the Southern Illinois president, John Guyon, dismissed the experience angle. "These jobs can be learned," Guyon rationalized weakly. "We're confident that Jim can pick up the necessary information to become a good administrator."

Charlotte West's case is a particularly clear example of the challenges women administrators face in attempting to move ahead in their male-dominated calling. She thinks she didn't get picked because the school's boosters were adamant about not having a woman controlling football.

Technical knowledge about football isn't the issue. "I know more about football," retorts Merrily Dean Baker, a senior NCAA official and a former sports administrator at Minnesota, "than any male athletic director knows about field hockey or women's tennis."

No, it's obvious that the football argument is really about something else. While you have to sympathize with West, you can see why Guyon hired Hart. The choice came down to money. Hart is well known in the area, and this could mean a lot in booster contributions. The middle-aged men who contribute want to keep football as their thing. Jim Hart's one of them. He's the guy they watched on the big-screen at the tavern every weekend. None of the guys who wear school colors on game day and plaster their cars with school bumper stickers ever knocked back brewskis together in a Carbondale bar watching Charlotte West balance a budget.

So picking a female athletic director—no matter how qualified—will probably cost a school money initially. But it's not clear that such financial considerations should be decisive. It's just another example of how universities, in their hunt for the Big Bucks, are all too willing to override their other values.

And it's not even clear that fairness to women in athletic administration unavoidably carries a long-term financial penalty. Texas's Donna Lopiano points out that Charlotte West could have hired Jim Hart to do the program's fundraising—effective A.D.s, she notes, shouldn't waste their time concentrating exclusively on fundraising anyway. Lynn Imergoot wants to know why the school didn't name Hart and West codirectors—that option was never considered. The administrative jobs just continue to be doled out by men to men.

There is no question that a substantial number of women around the country are qualified to administer the top-notch Division I athletic programs: Texas's Lopiano, Iowa's Grant, UCLA's Judy Holland, Illinois's Carol Kahrs, and West, to name a few. All have been at the upper level of college sports administration for years. Some, as the heads of separate women's programs, already have wide budgetary, fund-raising, and managerial experience. (It's worth noting that many of these women work at the few programs that did not participate in the merger mania of the 1970s.)

But none of these women seem particularly optimistic about their chances of running a Division I program. Lopiano's women's department at Texas has an annual budget of $3.5 million—larger than some combined Division I programs. Since 1975, she has helped build it into one of the most successful athletic programs—male or female—

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anywhere. Her teams have won 15 national titles. Yet she is routinely ignored at the big schools whenever they're looking for an athletic director.

Chris Grant oversees an annual budget of $3.2 million. She has never been offered a Division I job either.

Carol Kahrs, associate director for women's athletics at the University of Illinois, says that back in the mid-1970s she used to get a lot of calls for job interviews. Pretty soon though, she began to see that this was actually part of what she calls "the tokenism approach"—the schools making the calls were doing so only to comply with affirmative action requirements.

Indeed, even the full facts about the only two (out of a total of 294) Division I schools with women A.D.s—Duquesne and Central Connecticut State—are further grounds for pessimism. Neither school has a Division I football team. At Duquesne, the big sport is men's basketball—and it is the men's basketball coach, not the athletic director, who has administrative authority over the basketball team. "That basketball contract probably made it easier for them to hire me," admits Eileen Livingston, the Duquesne A.D. for the past six years. "Oh sure," confirms Arthur DeConciliis, head of the Duquesne booster club, "having a separate basketball program made that hiring much more acceptable."

College officials sometimes explain their skewed athletic hiring by saying that they don't receive many job applications from women. Donna Lopiano dismisses this claim: "Look," she says, "in the real world, when you've got a top position you don't sit back and wait for the resumes to come in. You decide who it is you want, and then you go out and twist their arms to come to your school. I've got one of the best coaching staffs in the country, and I've never hired anyone who's applied to me. As an administrator, you're in pretty sorry shape if you've got to depend on paper applications."

The consensus today among female sports administrators is that they face day-to-day discrimination in their jobs, which results in less prestige, less responsibility, more "dirty-work" assignments, fewer opportunities for advancement, and lower salaries. On the average a woman head basketball coach in college earns $23,000 less per year than her male counterparts. *USA Today* reports that at many schools the women's *head* coach makes less than the men's *assistant* coaches. At Georgia Tech, for instance, the head women's basketball coach makes $35,000 a year, while the two assistant men's coaches make $40,000 and $45,000.

So it's not surprising that women are leaving sports administration in ever-increasing numbers—many for business, where they can put their management skills to work for much more money and less aggravation. "I'm not sure," says Imergoot, "if men can understand how it feels to know that because of your sex, you'll never be head of a program you've devoted your life to."

Boys will be boys

The situation is little better in women's coaching. In 1988, there were 5,757 jobs for head coaches of women's teams. Although this was an increase of 52 jobs over 1987, women actually held seven *fewer* of them than they did in 1986. Like the decrease in female administrators, the decrease in female coaches can be traced back to the passage of Title IX.

Title IX dramatically increased the budgets of women's programs. In 1972, the year of its passage, women's athletic programs received only about 2 percent of total college athletic resources; after Title IX, that number jumped to about 20 percent. Before Title IX, women's coaching had been done mostly on a part-time or volunteer basis; but with that legislation, lots of funded, full-time positions came into existence. Suddenly coaching the co-eds looked much more attractive—now you could make a living at it—and predictably, men began to apply.

Not surprisingly, the men running the programs tended to hire people they already knew—other men. So it turns out that there is within women's sports—that most unlikely of sites—an old-boys network.

The NCAA, college sports' governing body, first spent years virtually ignoring women's athletics and then vigorously battling against the application of Title IX to athletics. It seems more enlightened now, having recently instituted a series of programs designed to help more women break into the ranks. The NCAA now provides 20 sports administration scholarships per year for women and minorities, as well as six internships. It is even assembling a databank that can help inform women of available positions around the country and conducting seminars for women on sports administration.

And the Women's Sports Foundation—a nonprofit group based in New York—has set up the Coaches Advisory Roundtable, a network of representatives from coaching and sports governance organizations. The CAR offers grant money to organizations committed to training women in coaching and officiating positions, and provides a speakers' bureau on women's issues in sports.

It's too early to tell if these efforts can convert the male athletic establishment. It won't be easy. "The rise in women's athletics threatens to take the financial resources away from the men's programs," explains Texas's Lopiano, "and they want to make sure they hold on to the purse strings. Athletics is the last bastion of male chauvinism." □

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TIDBITS & OUTRAGES

THE RULING CAME AFTER THE STATE BAR ASSOCIATION MEETING IN GSTAAD

The New Mexico Supreme Court suspended a program that would have required the state's lawyers to take 15 hours of legal and ethics seminars, citing the "administrative headaches" involved.

FORTUNATELY, SHE ALSO BELONGS TO THE BAR IN NEW MEXICO

In South Carolina, an attorney was suspended from practice for one year after she admitted stealing the proceeds from her daughter's Girl Scout cookie sale.

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AND THE BANK NEVER TOOK THE FIFTH

In the *London Times*, a British bank ran a full-page picture of Oliver North in an ad stating that it transferred money more efficiently than any one else "with a few notable exceptions."

"IF THIS SELLS, WE CAN RUN WITH THE LEMON-FLAVORED NAPALM"

BEI Defense Systems is promoting a new rocket by placing scratch-and-sniff ads in trade publications. The advertisements bear the slogan, "The smell of victory," and have the aroma of gunpowder.

OK, OK, WE JUST THOUGHT THAT WOULD SELL BETTER THAN "UNDIFFERENTIATED ALCOHOL BY-PRODUCTS"

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has rescinded permission for Sebastiani Vineyards to call one of its new low-priced wines "Domaine Chardonnay" on the grounds that it doesn't contain any Chardonnay.

"I'M SORRY SENATOR TOWER COULDN'T MAKE IT TONIGHT"

According to the Tequila News and Information Service, House Speaker Jim Wright was recently an honored guest at a party given by Jose Cuervo.

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Farm workers Don't Have to be Poor

The bosses say higher wages would mean fewer jobs. Don't believe them.

by Tina Rosenberg

Sometimes the news from south Texas seems like news from the Third World. Like when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) recently adopted a new policy of requiring immigrant aliens to remain at their point of entry into the country pending the lengthy processing period. Harlingen, Texas, one of the main immigrant thoroughfares in the Rio Grande Valley, was quickly overwhelmed with several thousand Central Americans forced to loiter in buildings and sleep in the streets. Things got so bad that the cops finally shut down the town's INS office.

While this seems distressing, there are other folks in Texas who endure much worse—working below minimum wage for years at a time, suffering Third World-caliber filth and disease, and dying 20 years before their time. These people are already U.S. citizens or at least hold the legal status Harlingen's minions were clamoring for. If you think you'd never do anything to support exploitation like this, maybe you should stop eating that salad.

When I visited La Frontera, Texas it resembled a Central American town, filled with the sounds of roosters crowing and mothers yelling in Spanish, the cries of children playing in old tires in front of small wooden houses, and the scent of smoke from burning trash. There was neither garbage collection nor a paved road. And La Frontera had no fresh water.

From the outside, Luis and Oralia Trevino's home in La Frontera, with its clean white paint and red roof, looked like it belonged on any prim Main street. But inside, the Trevinos' family pictures—Louis and Oralia have four children—were tacked up against a few planks that only suggested walls. The living room couch sat on a floor made of boards and sawdust.

Tommy Helle's family has been farming in the Rio Grande valley since the 1920s. In his early forties, he is the head of Helle Farms, which he owns with his father and two younger brothers. Helle Farms grows about 4,000 acres of vegetables and melons, and Helle Tomato is the largest tomato producer in the valley. Helle's office in the town of Mission is decorated with paintings and sculptures of tomatos and wall hangings from Texas A&M, where he earned a degree in agricultural economics.

Driving around his farms in his white suburban van with two cellular phones, Helle says that if his regular employees need money for food or medicine to tide them over when there is no work, he lends it to them, taking it out of their paychecks when work starts again. "The image of the farmer is of someone who oppresses labor and tries to get it for nothing," Helle says. But he wants to set me straight: "On my farm, everyone makes minimum wage."

Los loopholes

The residents of La Frontera are among the valley's 200,000 migrant farm workers and their families, who spend the winter months weeding, thinning, and picking valley produce and in the spring or summer pile into old cars and follow ap-

Tina Rosenberg is a writer based in Chile.

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ples or beets north to Minnesota and New York. Luis Trevino was born in Mexico, but Oralia and the children, like most people in La Frontera, were born in the United States.

Farm workers' life expectancy is about 25 percent shorter than the national average; their infant mortality rate, 25 percent higher. They are the second-poorest occupational group in the country, ahead only of domestics. The average per capita income of farm workers in San Juan, Texas is around $1,400—less than the average income in Mexico. The workers make higher hourly wages in the U.S. than they did in Mexico but, due to the overflow of labor, usually end up working fewer hours. The local unemployment rate is about four times the U.S. average. Farm workers in Texas do not receive overtime and are virtually uncovered by labor-relations or safety laws. There is no minimum wage on very small farms, and even at the biggest ones workers are often cheated out of the $3.35 minimum.

Farm work runs like Kelly Girl office help. Growers contract a crew leader, usually a Hispanic ex-farm worker who owns a bus. He in turn hires the farm workers.

The crew leader makes 90 cents for each bushel of spinach, for example, and then pays his field hands 50 cents per bushel. Supposedly coming out of the other 40 cents is Social Security, a safe bus for workers, toilets, fresh drinking water, and unemployment and workers' compensation insurance. Probably not. Especially when you don't pay for all those extras, crew leader can be a lucrative profession. Ruben Saenz, the head of the valley's crew leader organization, says that some crew leaders make $250,000 a year.

Saenz's membership files contain lists of violations of even the few legal protections afforded Texas farm workers—failure to pay wages when due, failure to keep records, unsafe transport, hiring illegal aliens. "It's harassment from the Wage and Hour people," he says defensively. I ask how many of his crew leaders were harassed that way. "I'd say a hundred percent," he replies.

During my stay in the valley, I heard dozens of horror stories about crew leaders. The son of Cirilo Mendoza filed a union complaint alleging that a crew leader told his father to wait in the bus all day after his father complained of chest pains. When the workday was finished, the crew leader drove the crew back to the International Bridge and then called an ambulance. Mendoza died in the hospital. Many workers and their unions and lawyers told me of crew leaders who don't provide water or toilets; who drive workers in unsafe trucks; who withhold and then illegally pocket Social Security; who house workers in buildings with no water, heat, or blankets; who expose them to deadly pesticides; or who pay by-the-bucket rates that don't add up to the minimum wage.

Overall, this complete abdication of responsibility reminds me of Latin America (where I've worked as a reporter for the past several years). But in Latin America, the roots of this powerlessness are centuries old. In Texas it was achieved by design.

In Texas, even when the laws have favored farm workers, often law enforcement has not. The Texas Rangers brutally broke up the state's first farm-labor strike.

Part of the problem is certainly that farm workers were specifically exempted from every major piece of social legislation of the New Deal—the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Social Security Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the National Labor Relations Act. As a result, farm workers were at the outset excluded from laws guaranteeing a minimum wage, Social Security, unemployment insurance, management recognition of labor unions, health and safety standards, and protection against child labor. Workers' compensation, which was passed on a state-by-state basis, excluded farm workers everywhere but in Ohio and New Jersey.

This meticulous set of exceptions didn't happen because there was something intrinsically different about agricultural labor. It came about because in the 1930s and 1940s, when all that labor legislation was written, farmers were a powerful lobby. In addition, most farm and domestic workers were black. Excluding the two largest categories of black labor was a price President Franklin Roosevelt paid to win support for the New Deal from southern congressmen.

Over the years Texas farm workers have received—at a shockingly leisurely pace—some of the legal protections they were originally denied. In 1950, they were brought into Social Security; in 1966, many categories of them were guaranteed the federal minimum wage; and in the mid-1980s, the Texas legislature brought their work under the state's workmen's compensation plan. But these extra rights

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haven't made much difference. "The crew leaders now have to pay Social Security, federal and state unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, etc.," explains Marc Linder, an attorney with Texas Rural Legal Aid, a tax-supported organization that handles farm workers' civil claims against farmers and crew leaders, "so they just take it out of what they used to pay the workers. In effect, the workers are themselves subsidizing their new benefits."

Such abuses are at bottom made possible by the tremendous labor pool. Even though workers may end up poorer in south Texas than in northern Mexico, they still want to come to the U.S. to work or live here legally. They still stream across at Hidalgo and the other border towns. "There were so many people here looking for farm work legally even before the liberalized immigration laws," reports Linder, "that if there weren't a minimum wage, people would probably take jobs at about $2 an hour."

Progress, Texas style

Most people's awareness of farm workers came and went during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the United Farm Workers (UFW) ran the grape and lettuce boycotts that eventually led to collective bargaining contracts with California growers. Cesar Chavez began organizing in California in 1962 and won the contracts 13 years later. Chavez's principal weapon was the boycott, not the strike, and he succeeded only by focusing all his resources on California, a state with liberal union laws, a highly boycottable, specific-to-California product like grapes, and a liberal legislature and a pro-farm workers governor, Jerry Brown.

Texas's unions, by contrast, are weak. There is no collective bargaining agreement between Texas farm workers and growers. This accounts for much of the workers' predicament. But even when the laws have favored workers, often law enforcement has not. The Texas Rangers brutally broke up the state's first farm-labor strike in 1966. In 1974, the Supreme Court admonished the Rangers for acting as the personal police force of the growers. During a demonstration on his ranch on Memorial Day 1975, a farmer named C.K. Miller shot 11 people with a 12-gauge shotgun. "I didn't shoot *at* them," he later corrected a television reporter. "I shot *them*." Despite dozens of witnesses, a grand jury did not indict him.

Ten years later almost to the day and almost in the same spot, Miller's son Chet shot at four Mexicans who had crossed the river onto the property. One jumped in the river and was drowned. This time there was some progress, Texas-style. Unlike his father, Chet Miller was convicted.

Farmers say that their animosity towards the unions does not stem from self-interest. Their position is that higher salaries or better working conditions would force them to cut back on jobs.

Indeed, even with all the substandard and unsupervised conditions, the biggest complaint of workers and union organizers is not low pay but too little work. But a look at the economics of vegetable farming shows that the trade-off does not work as neatly as farmers claim and workers fear.

In Latin America the roots of powerlessness are centuries old. In Texas, it was achieved by design.

The farmers' case does not hold up, because farmers do not behave the way they talk. Despite hard times, vegetable farmers have not mechanized, moved their operations to Mexico, changed crops, or shut down on any significant scale. Nor did they do so in California following the wage increases won there by the UFW. In fact, the valley's production is up.

What the farmers' behavior shows is that while labor costs are one factor in their business decisions, they are not the only one. Hourly wage rates in Mexico are currently less than a tenth of those in Texas, certainly a big enough difference to have already pulled farming out of Texas if that were the decisive consideration.

Supply is what's decisive. Vegetable farming is like high-stakes gambling. The price shippers offer to farmers depends on the supply not just in Texas but also elsewhere. So price finally depends most of all on the weather. The system most farmers use is to have a huge crop in the field the year gold is struck, which can make up for four or five bad years. After they take out their profits, farmers tend to turn as much money as they can back into the land in order to catch that big harvest. That includes the funds they should spend on more decent wages.

And this tight-fisted approach is exacerbated by the cuts taken by distributors and other middlemen. Between the Safeway and the farm there are so many profits taken that it's estimated that if consumers paid an extra nickel for lettuce, the farmer would get only two-thirds of a penny more. So, the farmers reason

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The Worst City Government

Just days after arriving in Washington to take up my new job as an editor with the *Monthly*, I got a bracing introduction to local municipal procedures.

It all started with an unusually violent traffic incident not far from my apartment—a man named Jerome Greene demolished much of a busy block of K street downtown with the rented truck he was barely at the wheel of. Before the apparently drunk Greene could be arrested by police, he crashed into a dozen vehicles, rammed five utility poles, collided with a city bus, and, worst of all, ran over a woman who was trying to get out of his way. Many witnesses thought he chased her down intentionally.

Although the D.C. cops confirmed that Greene was legally intoxicated and that within the past two years he'd been convicted of heroin and assault charges, they set him free two hours later, pending a court appearance. The D.C. police chief, Maurice Turner, defended his department's action as "proper procedure."

Then a few days later it was revealed that Greene had received a D.C. driver's license despite having had his New York license suspended three years earlier because of unresolved traffic violations there. The head of the D.C. motor vehicle office, Larry Greenberg, said that Greene got a license through the bureau so effortlessly because he stated that his driving privileges had never been suspended anywhere. "We had no reason but to believe it was his first driver's license," Greenberg told *The Washington Post*, even though Greene is 42 and the New York traffic violations computer—to which D.C. authorities have access—contains 72 suspensions against Greene—each one for a moving violation.

Compare all this to the experiences I had my first week in town. A few days after the Greene disaster, I was walking to work when I passed the spot where I'd parked my car the night before. Only now there was too much spot and not enough car. I immediately called the police to report the theft. A half-hour later the cops called me back with great news—my car had not been stolen. Actually, not so great. It had been towed. "Why?" I asked. "Rush hour tow-away zone," said the voice in uniform.

I was pretty positive I hadn't parked in a forbidden spot, but I went back to check. Sure enough, there were no signs on the block where I'd last seen my car. I did now notice that there were some sign*poles* in the area, but they were just bare corrugated sticks rammed pointlessly into the ground.

Buoyed by this discovery, early the next morning I went in search of justice. At around 8:30, I arrived instead at what the city calls The Bureau of Adjudication. Inside there were about 100 glum people waiting. Picture a Soviet breadline, then subtract the bread. I figured I wasn't like all these other unhappy folks: speeders, drunk drivers, and scofflaws. Glove compartments wadded with old citations. Not me! I've never even had a speeding ticket. And besides, I was *innocent*!

That was my thinking at 8:30. By 11:30 when I was still not walking in to my "walk-in" hearing, my idealism was a little dulled. I had now been in custody longer than Jerome Greene.

Nevertheless, I figured that once I got before a judge, everything would be resolved quickly. When it was finally my turn, I was offered the choice of Admit, Admit With Explanation, or Deny.

"Deny," I said, and I started to lay out my case. But even after I got to my description of the parking space the judge remained unsmiling. "Do you have pictures?" she asked me, looking down at me hard through her metal-rim glasses. No, I said, but I went on to explain that I had gotten corroboration from the people at a nearby shop. I showed her their business cards with names, addresses, and phone numbers. "Are these people here today? Do you have statements from them?" was all she said to that.

Without satellite photographs, live witnesses or affidavits, all I could get was a continuance. Greene's word was his bond. Mine was worthless. The judge requested a field investigation, which she said could take four to six weeks. And although I have a local job and residence and no criminal or traffic violation record, the city wouldn't just return my car before that inquiry was completed favorably. Even though I'd done nothing wrong, I had to pay $53 up front. (The $50 was the towing fee, the $3 was the storage fee I'd incurred waiting around for my hearing.)

After ponying up the money, I took the Metrorail to the bus to the impoundment lot. The woman at the gate was unexpectedly pleasant, but she was the exception. Inside where I had to take my paperwork was Attitude Central. The young woman dealing with me from behind the plate-glass was so tight-lipped and monosyllabic that I could barely understand her. After she processed my forms, she told me where my car was. As soon as I got to it, I discovered that my key no longer opened the driver's door. Apparently, the tow boys broke the lock when they forced their way in (to release the parking brake and put it in neutral). Now I could only get in by using the passenger's side and climbing across. I went back to the office and told Ms. Attitude about the damage. Without saying a word or even looking up at me she handed me a sheet of paper. I waited for some sort of accompanying explanation, but clearly, none was on the way. As for a swift response from somebody else, the document in my hand soon dissuaded me. It stated that the mayor could legally take six months to act on my damage claim.

—*Scott Shuger*

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that they couldn't give workers any kind of a real raise without pricing themselves right out of the market. Is this true? Well, with such a large labor pool available, the farmers don't have to find out. There are plenty of workers in south Texas who will take the wages just where they are.

Worse still, in the Rio Grande Valley farmers could cut wages in half and still have fields full of pickers. Just as the available supply of produce dwarfs all other price considerations, the available supply of labor makes all other wage considerations unimportant. Farmers pay workers poorly not because they have to, but because they can.

A morning at the bridge

Without exception, the farmers I spoke with said that the way farm workers live now is right and natural. At lunch one day, a farm manager abruptly ended a conversation about wages to tell me that the new immigration bill would allow the Mexicans to retake Texas. "Do you know how many of them there are?" she asked me with alarm. "And they're already all on welfare. Just go ask in any of the schools."

"That's a joke," said another farmer uneasily. "She's telling a joke."

But she wasn't telling a joke. Helle, whose family has owned his farm for four generations, once told me in all seriousness, "The workers may not have anything, but I didn't either when I was 17."

"If they stay in Mexico," Newt Dyer, another vegetable farmer, told me, "they'll do nothing but carry tortillas on their heads."

The Trevinos provide at least one counterexample to these Texas truisms. Oralia is very proud that her children have missed only one day of school due to the family's summer trips north. One son wants to become an airplane mechanic, the other a welder. Blanca, a high-school junior, is in a college-prep program and hopes to go to the University of Texas. Her National Honor Society silver plaque is prominently displayed in the Trevinos' house.

Another hopeful sign is that more Mexican-Americans are winning political office in the state, although, as the majority of Hispanic crew leaders illustrates, this is no guarantee of sensitivity to workers' problems. Hispanics now hold three of the valley's four seats in the state legislature, and not coincidentally, in just this past year, Texas passed a right-to-know pesticide law and extended unemployment compensation privileges to farm workers. Additionally, some of the county commissioners have been filing injunctions to insure that new neighborhoods where farm workers locate have water and roads. And some lawsuits have forced growers to make small changes. Yet these gains mean little in the face of the valley's current economic slump brought on by Mexico's own financial crisis.

That this is the fundamental truth can be seen every morning at the International Bridge at Hidalgo. At 5:30 on a typical morning, a crowd of men has already started to gather under the overhang of a nearby shopping-center roof. They are looking at the televisions in a duty-free shop window as they wait for crew leaders to pull up in their school buses. It's still dark. About a hundred feet away a line of lights from the border patrol booths stretches across the haze.

During the onion harvest in March and April, there are 1,000 people here, but it's February now and there are only 200 workers waiting at the bridge.

The luckier migrants, like the Trevinos, have regular, good summer work and a car. Those not so lucky come to the bridge, hoping to find a good day's picking or better, a good trip, with lots of 10-hour workdays and a piece rate that averages $7 an hour.

But the good trips are rare. Margarito Rios certainly has been having trouble drawing any. One summer, he says, he was recruited to go to Pecos and harvest melons. Despite the promise of 8- or 10-hour workdays seven days a week, there was work only two or three hours a day. After two weeks of making barely enough to buy groceries, he wanted to go home. But his crew leader refused to give him his pay early so he could leave. Rios filed a suit through Texas Rural Legal Aid. Nothing happened, but Rios feels the crew leaders blacklisted him for it. "The crew leaders call me 'el peor guy,'—the worst guy," he says. Last year he made about $800.

The law says that if a worker is making an overnight trip, the crew leader must show the worker in writing what kind of work it will be, his hours, pay, and the ownership of the field. But the futility of the law is apparent after a few minutes at the bridge.

I always wondered why so many farm workers I spoke with told me they had filed suits. Now I knew why. The ones who complain are the ones who take chances, and talking to me was taking a chance. Most farm workers would never go up to a crew leader to ask what he was paying. He could choose from dozens of silent, hoping people; why pick someone who asks questions?

Margarito Rios, "el peor guy," was not chosen to work this day. I approach Rios after two full buses have already gone. He comes to the bridge every day, he says, and last week and this week he hasn't worked at all. It is already completely light and the remaining bus in the parking lot is filling up fast. "The onion harvest is coming," he says, eyes brightening. "Then they need so many people that I bring my relatives." After waiting around for another hour, Rios goes home. □

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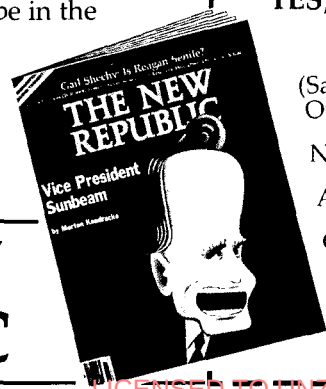

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THE MINDS THAT MATTER

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Beyond the Legal Right

Why liberals and feminists don't like to talk about the morality of abortion

by Jason DeParle

"We are going to watch a child being torn apart..." promises Dr. Bernard Nathanson, "by the unfeeling steel instruments of the abortionist." But the promise isn't really kept. What we see in *The Silent Scream*, Nathanson's famous anti-abortion film, isn't red dismemberment but flickering gray chaos. I stopped the video tape three times to examine the fuzzy image that Nathanson calls a child's mouth emitting its silent scream. But what I saw looked more like a satellite photo of a Manitoba blizzard, an undifferentiated swirl.

Several years ago as the film's influence spread—Ronald Reagan showed it at the White House—Planned Parenthood released a handsome brochure of rebuttal, entitled "The Facts Speak Louder." Whereas *The Silent Scream* claimed the fetal head was too big for a suction tube and had to be crushed first with forceps, the brochure said the doctor could have used a larger tube. Whereas *The Silent Scream* said the invasion of the uterus raised the fetal heart throb from 140 beats per minute to 200, the brochure said a rate of 200 is normal. The lines of inquiry remained the same on the "CBS Morning News," where dueling experts speculated on whether a 12-week-old fetus possesses enough cortex to feel pain, and what, in fact, we mean by pain—something understood or merely reflexive? "We know that the fetus spends lots of time with its mouth open," said one Yale physician, so what looked like a scream might have been "a chance random finding."

While these facts may, as Planned Parenthood says, speak loudly, it's unlikely that they say what the prochoice groups hope, since they put the fetus, even a televised facsimile, on center stage, precisely where prochoice groups don't want it. Assume the film is wrong and the Planned Parenthood brochure is right. Assume that was a fetal yawn and not a scream. None of the experts contested that it was a fetal mouth, and that it was part of a fetal head, attached to a fetal spine, and that it had arms and legs, fingers and eyes. Nathanson was certainly wrong to suggest that the 12-week-old fetus was "indistinguishable in every way from any of us"; a rather important difference, one would think, is that the rest of us aren't enveloped in the living flesh of another human being with needs and rights of her own. But if the film's scientific and rhetorical claims are extravagant, it nonetheless succeeded in directing all eyes toward—take your pick—the "fetus" or "unborn child."

Writing in *Ms.* magazine, Barbara Ehrenreich argued that the film's failure to mention the woman having the abortion, "not even as a sinner or a murderer," was the "eeriest thing" about it. "Abortions, after all, have to take place *somewhere*," she wrote, "i.e., in the uterus of an actual human being." Ehrenreich's point is well-taken: much of the right-to-life movement does act as if abortions took place in an abstract neutral setting, rather than within a woman whose life may begin to unravel with an unwanted pregnancy. But I don't think I'd call that the "eeriest thing" about *The Silent Scream*; as eeriness goes, the image, clear in mind if fuzzy on screen, of tiny bits of head, shoulders, ribs, and thighs being fed to a suction tube is formidable.

It's hard to hold these two images—the dismembered body of the fetus and the enveloping body of the mother, each begging the allegiance of

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our conscience—in mind at the same time. One of the biggest problems with the abortion debate is how rarely we do it, at least in public discourse. While contentious issues naturally produce one-dimensional positions, the remarkable thing about abortion is that many otherwise sensitive, nuanced thinkers hold them. To one side, visions only of women in crisis, terrified and imperilled by an invasive growth; to the other, only legions of innocent children, chased by the steely needle.

The inhumanity that issues from baronies within the right-to-life movement is well known: the craziness of a crusade against birth control; the view of women as second-class citizens; even the descent into bomb-throwing madness. The insistence that an unborn child must always be saved, no matter the cost, isn't compassion but a compassionate mask, and it obscures a face of cruelty.

But what ought to be equally if not more disturbing to feminists, liberals, and others on the Left is the extent to which prominent prochoice intellectuals mirror that dishonesty and denial. One-and-a-half million abortions each year is not the moral equivalent of the Holocaust, precisely because of the way in which fetuses *are* distinguishable: growing inside women, they can wreck the lives of mothers and of others, including her children, who depend upon her. But the fact that three of 10 pregnancies end in abortion poses moral questions that much of the Left, especially abortion's most vocal defenders, refuses to acknowledge. This lowering of intellectual standards offers a useful way of looking at the reflexes of liberals in general, and also reveals much about the passions—many of them just—that underpin contemporary feminism.

What the suction machine sucks

The declaration of a legal right to an abortion doesn't end the discussion of what our attitude toward it should be, it merely begins it. Ehrenreich, like many of the prochoice movement's writers and intellectuals, would have us believe that the early fetus (and 90 percent of abortions take place in the first three months) is nothing more than a dewy piece of tissue, to be excised without regret. To speak of abortion as a moral dilemma, she has written, is to use "a mealy-mouthed vocabulary of evasion," to be compromised by a "strange and cabalistic question."

Yet everything we know—not just from science and religion but from experience, intuition, and compassion—suggests otherwise. A pregnant woman, even talking to her doctor, doesn't call the growth inside her an embryo or fetus. She calls it a *baby*. And she is admonished, by fellow feminists among others, to hold it in trust: Don't drink. Don't smoke. Eat well, counsels the feminist manual, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: "think of it as eating for three—you, your baby, and the placenta. . ." Is it protoplasm that she's feeding? Or is it protoplasm only if she's feeding it to the forceps?

Grant for a moment that it is; agree that what the suction machine sucks is nothing more than tissue. Why then the feminist fuss over abortions for purposes of sex selection? If a couple wants a boy and nature hands them the makings of a girl, why not abort and start again? All that matters—no?—is "choice."

It wasn't sex selection but nuclear power that got a feminist named Juli Loesch rethinking her own contradictory views of fetuses. As an organizer attempting to stop the construction of Three Mile Island, she had schooled herself on what leaked radiation can do to prenatal development. At a meeting one day, she says, a group of women issued an unexpected challenge: "if you're so concerned about what Plutonium 239 might do to the child's arm bud you should go see what a suction machine does to his whole body."

In fact, we need neither *The Silent Scream* nor a degree in fetal physiology to tell us what we already know: that abortion is the eradication of human life and should be avoided whenever possible. Should it be legal? Yes, since the alternatives are worse. Is it moral? Perhaps, depending on what's at stake. Fetal life exists along a continuum; our obligations to it grow as it grows, but they must be weighed against other demands.

The number of liberals, feminists, and other defenders of abortion eager to simplify the moral questions is, at the very least, deeply ironic. One of the animating spirits of liberalism and others factions on the Left, and proudly so, is the concern for the most vulnerable. But what could be more vulnerable than the unborn? And how can liberalism hope to regain the glory of standing for humanity and morality while finding nothing inhumane or immoral in the extermination of so much life?

The problem with much prochoice thinking is suggested by the movement's chief slogan, "a woman's right to control her body," which fails to acknowledge that the great moral and biological conundrum is precisely that another body is involved. Slogans are slogans, not dissertations; but this one is revealing in that it mirrors so much of the prochoice tendency to ignore the conflict in an unwanted pregnancy between two competing interests, mother and embryo, and insist that only one is worthy of consideration. Daniel Callahan, a moral philosopher, has written of the need, upon securing the right to a legal abortion, to preserve the "moral tension" implicit in an unwanted pregnancy. This is something that too few members of the prochoice movement is willing to do.

One fine example of preserving the moral tension

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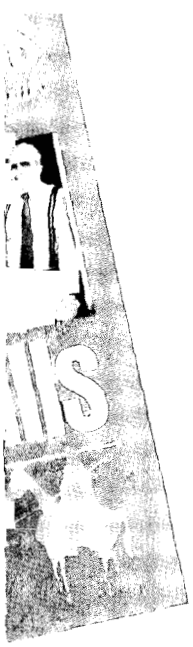

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appeared several years ago in a *Harper's* piece by Sallie Tisdale, an abortion clinic nurse with a grudging acceptance of her work. First the mothers: "A twenty-one-year-old woman, unemployed, uneducated, without family, in the fifth month of her fifth pregnancy. A forty-two-year-old mother of teenagers, shocked by her condition, refusing to tell her husband. A twenty-three-year-old mother of two having her seventh abortion, and many women in their thirties having their first. . . .Oh, the ignorance. . . .Some swear they have not had sex, many do not know what a uterus is, how sperm and egg meet, how sex makes babies. . . .They come so young, snapping gum, sockless and sneakered, and their shakily applied eyeliner smears when they cry. . . .I cannot imagine them as mothers."

> Women who became sexually active outside of marriage in the days of abortion bans faced the cruelest choice: the life-wrecking stigma of pregnancy out-of-wedlock or the back alley.

Then the fetus: "I am speaking in a matter-of-fact voice about 'the tissue' and 'the contents' when the woman suddenly catches my eye and asks, 'How big is the baby now?'. . . .I gauge, and sometimes lie a little, weaseling around its infantile features until its clinging power slackens. But when I look in the basin, among the curdlike blood clots, I see an elfin thorax, attenuated, its pencilline ribs all in parallel rows with tiny knobs of spine rounding upwards. A translucent arm and hand swim beside. . . .I have fetus dreams, we all do here: dreams of abortions one after the other; of buckets of blood splashed on the walls; trees full of crawling fetuses. . . ."

It's not surprising that the defenders of abortion don't like pictures of fetuses; General Westmoreland didn't like the cameras in Vietnam either. Fetuses aren't babies, and the photos don't end the discussion. But they make it a more sober one, as it should be. Fetuses aren't just *their* image but our image too, anyone's image who is going to confront abortion.

If the prochoice movement doesn't like the way *The Silent Scream* depicts the fetus, turn to an early edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Describing an abortion at 16 weeks by means of saline injection, the feminist handbook explains: "Contractions will start some hours later. Generally they will be as strong as those of a full-term pregnancy. . . .The longest and most difficult part will be the labor. The breathing techniques taught in the childbirth section of this book might help make the contractions more bearable. After eight to fifteen hours of labor, the fetus is expelled in a bedpan in the patient's bed."

Heil Mary

When Suzannah Lessard wrote about abortion in *The Washington Monthly* in 1972 ("Aborting a Fetus: the Legal Right, the Personal Choice"), a year before *Roe v. Wade*, she described what she called a "reaction formation along ideological lines. . . of the new feminist movement" as it related to abortion. This was a time when Gloria Steinem was insisting that a fetus was nothing more than "mass of dependent protoplasm" and aborting it the moral equivalent of a tonsillectomy. "I think a lot of women need to go fanatically ideological for a while because they can't in any other way overthrow the insidious sense of themselves as inferior," Lessard wrote, "nor otherwise live with the rage that comes to the surface when the realize how they have been psychically mauled." This is an observation about the psychology of oppression that could be applied to any number of righteous rebellions; the path to autonomy tends to pass, by necessity perhaps, through stages of angry defiance. "But I don't think that state of mind—hopefully temporary—is the strength of the movement," Lessard wrote. "It has very little to do with working out a new, undamaging way of living as women."

But to judge by much contemporary prochoice writing, the mere-protoplasm camp still thrives. Certainly, there are exceptions, Mario Cuomo's 1984 speech at Notre Dame perhaps being the most famous: "A fetus is different from an appendix or set of tonsils. At the very least. . .the full potential of human life is indisputably there. That—to my less subtle mind—by itself should demand respect, caution, indeed. . .reverence. . . [But] I have concluded that the approach of a constitutional amendment is not the best way for us to seek to deal with abortion." And others on the Left have gone even further: Nat Hentoff, who supports a legal ban, has written a number of attacks on abortion in the *Village Voice*; Mary Meehan, a former antiwar activist, published an article in *The Progressive* that attacked the magazine's own editorial stance in favor of legal abortion.

But these are the exceptions. Pick up the past 10 years of *The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, or *Ms*. Read liberals and feminists on the op-ed pages of *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*—you're likely to find more concern about the snail darter than the 1.6 million fetuses aborted each year.

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Consider:

►Barbara Ehrenreich in a "Hers" column for *The New York Times*: "I cannot speak for other women, of course, but the one regret I have about my own abortions is that they cost money that might otherwise have been spent on something more pleasurable, like taking the kids to movies and theme parks. . . ."

►The Yale University women's center, pledged to be "a place for all women—of every race, ethnicity, age, ability, class, sexual orientation, religion. . ." barred a group called Yale Students for Life. After the prolife group applied for space, the women's center amended its rules to specify that its members support "reproductive freedom." Similar banishment of prolife groups from women's studies centers has occurred on a number of college campuses.

►*Mother Jones* published a note on Catholic schools that amended the Pledge of Allegiance to read, "with liberty and justice for all, born and unborn." The magazine headlined it, "Heil Mary."

►Linda Gordon, a leading feminist historian, in *Harper's*: "I'm not sure, by the way, that we should spend our time debating the ethical points of abortion. . . . Abstract ethical arguments over when life begins are not very illuminating. They inevitably become moralistic—and they inevitably carry the implication that people who support abortion are less moral than other people.

"When women are able to be self-assertive, that to me is a step toward moral, emotional, and intellectual growth. When I had an abortion, that's what it represented to me."

►Ellen Willis, a senior editor at the *Village Voice*, in the same issue of *Harper's*: "I think it is a *good* thing to have an abortion rather than to have a child that you don't want. Women *should* feel good about it. . . ."

►Katha Pollitt, a poet and critic, writing in *The Nation*: "When I first heard that an antiabortion demonstrator had stationed himself outside of the building in which *The Nation* has its offices—a building that houses, among other businesses and concerns, a gynecological clinic that performs abortions—I had an immediate image of what he would look like. He would be pale and rawboned and strained, a hungry fanatic in a cheap suit, like a street-corner preacher in a Flannery O'Connor story. . .

"I was wrong about the details. The demonstrator—perhaps harasser is a better word for what he does—wears his hair in a long ponytail and, in his blue jeans and parka, looks like a pudgy hippie. . . . I was right about the main thing though: he is a religious fanatic. . . .

"There was a certain elation, I admit, at having my beliefs about the antiabortion movement so neatly confirmed in a single person: that it is a reactionary religious crusade, opposed to nonprocreative sex and contraception, indifferent to the health and individual circumstances of women, bone-ignorant. . . ."

►Katha Pollitt again, this time in a "Hers" column for *The New York Times*: "Moralists, including some who are prochoice, like to say that abortion isn't or shouldn't be a method of birth control. But that's just what abortion is—a bloody, clumsy method of birth control."

►*Ms.* in 1989, naming Anne Archer, an actress and prochoice activist, Woman of the Year: "Cut to a scene at last summer's Republican National Convention. We're in that part of Schlaflyland where reproductive reactionaries who feel free to thrust bottled fetuses in your face are assured a place on the party platform. The audience. . .contains some of those elements who wouldn't mind frying Betty Ford at the stake for being a radical feminist. . . ."

Archer says: "I don't care [about the anti-choice women]. They're a minority. They're vocal, but it's not really based on intelligent thinking or caring. . . .Once you take a step back and deny women privacy and choice, you put them back in the kitchen; you put them back in an inferior position. If they cannot control their reproductive systems, they cannot control their personal destiny."

"The anti-choice, anti-privacy forces," *Ms.* says, "would seem to prefer things that way. . . ."

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And when it comes to dissent, even dissent of the mildest sort?

►In 1985 *The North Carolina Independent*, a biweekly alternative paper with a history of support for left-liberal and feminist causes, put a fetus on the front page, labeled with the blandest caption: "Controversial, magnified images like this one. . .are credited with winning converts to the anti-abortion camp."

The phone calls and letters poured in. "The enmity that it aroused was just unbelievable," said Katherine Fulton, the paper's editor. "It was perceived as antifeminist." The graphic seemed like "the other side's image. We didn't couch it enough."

►Fetuses again, this time in *The Progressive*: In 1985, the magazine ran an *advertisement* from a group called Feminists for Life. "This Little Girl Needs Protection. . ." it claimed, presenting an embryo at eight weeks.

The Funding Exchange, a New York philanthropy that had supported the magazine, wrote to say it was "greatly offended," was canceling its subscription, and would henceforth find it "difficult for our staff to lobby for funding for your publication."

Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, a civil liberties group, weighed in as well: "Happily I am not a subscriber so I needn't cancel my subscription," he wrote. "I would surely do so after seeing the antiabortion ad. . ."

Liberal precincts

The list could continue, but the point is clear: questioning abortion—not only the legal right but also the moral choice—is often viewed, even by otherwise sensitive and thoughtful activists, as a betrayal of the highest order. (Except, at times, for Catholics, whose antiabortion views are usually dismissed as a quaint if unfortunate quirk of faith.)

A great irony about this public demonstration of zeal is that there may be more ambivalence on the Left than is usually acknowledged. When the *The Progressive* published Mary Meehan's prolife piece in 1980, it drew more mail than any article save the famous guide to the workings of the H-bomb. About half were predictable: "your knees buckle at the mere thought of taking a forthright stand for women's rights," "prolife is only a code word representing the neo-fascist absolutist thinking." Etc, etc.

But the others: "I support most of the positions of the women's movement, but I part company with those who insist on abortion as a 'right of women to control their own bodies.' There's a lot more than just one body that is being controlled here." "I have no religious objection to abortion, but I do oppose it from a humanitarian point of view." "I was awfully glad to see a liberal publication printing an anti-abortion article."

Why aren't there more voices like these heard in liberal precincts? The answers come in two general sets, one pertaining to liberal and progressive values generally and the other connected more specifically to the passions of contemporary feminism.

Right or wrong, abortion helps further values that liberals and progressives generally hold in esteem. Among them is public health. Even those with qualms about abortion tend to back the legal right, if for no other reason than to stem the mutilation that a return to back alleys would surely entail. There's also an equity-between-the-classes argument: if abortion is banned all women may experience trouble getting one, but the poor will have the most trouble of all. For others, there are always planes to Sweden.

> It's not surprising that the defenders of abortion don't like pictures of fetuses. General Westmoreland didn't like the cameras in Vietnam either.

Beyond questions of abortion's legality, the Left tends to hold values that encourage the acceptance of abortion's morality too. There's the civil liberties perspective, which argues that the state should "stay out of the bedroom." There's a population control argument; without abortion, wrote one *Progressive* reader, "there will be a more intense scramble for food and all the world's natural resources." There's a help-the-poor strand of thinking; what, liberals constantly ask, about the welfare mother who can't afford another child? And there's a fairness-in-the-marketplace argument, which maintains that without absolute control of their fertility, women cannot compete with men: if two Arnold & Porter associates conceive a child at a Christmas party tryst, bringing it into the world, whether she keeps it or not, will penalize her career much more than his.

These principles—a thirst for fairness between genders and classes, for civil liberties, for economic opportunity—are honorable ones. And they speak well of those who hold them as caring not only for

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life itself but also for its quality.

Careful, though. Quality-of-life arguments sometimes stop focusing on quality and start frowning on life. Concerns about population control have their place; but whether abortion is a fit means of seeking it raises questions that go well beyond environmental impact studies. One of the most troubling prochoice arguments is the what-kind-of-life-will-the-child-have line. Yes, poverty may appropriately enter the moral calculus if an additional child will truly tumble the family into chaos and despair, and those situations exist. (And there is little cruelty purer than child abuse, which afflicts unwanted children of all classes.) But liberal talk about the quality of life can quickly devolve into a form of cardboard compassion that assumes life for the poor doesn't mean much anyway. That sentiment says to an unborn child of poverty: life is tough, so you should die. Compassionate, that.

Polyester clothes

Abortion's neat fit with other liberal concerns creates a package-politics tug. The right-to-life movement looms as the Great Beast in the mind of the Left: "Schlaflyland." "Reproductive reactionaries." (Do opponents of abortion like Nat Hentoff or the Berrigans live in Schlaflyland? Does Christopher Hitchens?) One is inclined to take Katha Pollitt very much at her word, when she confesses to a "a certain elation, I admit, at having all my beliefs about the antiabortion movement so neatly confirmed. . . ." That kind of confirmation lulls us into avoiding the issues right-to-lifers pose.

Let's be clear: much of the right-to-life movement *is* antipoor and antiwoman. This tends to be particularly true of the movement's political spokesmen, like Jesse Helms. And beneath the debate on the moral status of the unborn, lies a debate on how career, family, sex, birth control, and control in general should shape our lives—all of which are important, but none of which finally answer the question of our obligations to prenatal life. Hunkering down for the great defense of other values, the defenders of abortion tend to miss the ways in which their own concerns can wend back to the womb.

Juli Loesch, the antinuclear activist at Three Mile Island, said a social discomfort with the antiabortion people she knew initially closed her mind to their arguments. "They weren't my set," she said. "They liked Lawrence Welk; I liked the Rolling Stones. They wore polyester clothes; I wore natural cotton. They were pro-inhibition; I was anti-inhibition." But in reconsidering her protests against the Vietnam war, Loesch said she found herself being "inconsistent to the point of incoherence. We were saying that killing was not an acceptable solution to conflict situations, yet when we had our own

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conflict situation we were willing to go straight to killing as a technical fix."

Another obvious link, made too seldom, concerns abortion and executions. If killing criminals is wrong, then what about fetuses? (At least the criminals have done something wrong.) The issues, of course, aren't synonymous; there are thoughtful arguments to be made to permit abortion and ban capital punishment, and the other way around. But one of the real ironies of contemporary politics is that the Left and Right tend to split that ticket in exactly opposite ways, and each often invokes the word "sanctity."

> "Would I feel comfortable getting rid of a fetus in the first few months of its life? Yes indeed," said Ehrenreich. "And I have done it without qualm."

Perhaps if liberals and progressives weren't so besieged in general, more ambivalence about abortion would bubble to the top. In my talks with Katha Pollitt and Barbara Ehrenreich, they, like others, found it particularly troubling that moral objections to abortion would be raised by someone, who, to use Ehrenreich's phrase, "had been on the right side of the barricades." When I asked why, she said, "that kind of thing always cuts the legitimacy of our [legal] right; it's the kind of wedge used to threaten us."

The Christmas party tryst

While the values of the Left in general provide one set of explanations for the contours of the abortion debate, the specific passions and experiences of feminists provide another. These concerns don't, finally, answer the question of what our personal, as opposed to legal, obligations toward fetal life need to be. But they do underline the history of injustice that women have inherited.

In rough outline, one persuasive feminist argument for keeping abortion *legal*—an argument I accept—goes something like this: Without the option of abortion, women cannot be as free as men. Not just socially and economically but psychologically as well. And not just those with unwanted pregnancies. As Ellen Willis of the *Voice* has put it, "Criminalizing abortion doesn't just harm individual women with unwanted pregnancies, it affects all women's sense of themselves. Without control of our fertility we can never envision ourselves as free, for our biology makes us constantly vulnerable." Vulnerable to failed birth control. To rape or other coercive sex. Or simply to passion. Vulnerable in a way that men are not. And in a society that rightly prizes liberty as much as ours, it's unacceptable for one half of its members to be less free, at an essential level, than the other. Therefore the legal right.

Of course, having the legal right to do something doesn't tell us whether it's a desirable thing to do. Women have the legal right to smoke and drink heavily during pregnancy, but few of us would hesitate to dissuade them from doing so. Why don't more feminists take the same view toward abortion—defending the right, but urging women to incline against it whenever possible? The feminist defenders of abortion I spoke with reacted to that proposal with a litany of past and present injustices against women—economic, social, political, and cultural, all of them quite real. "You can sit around all day talking about what's the morally right thing to do—rights and sacrifices and the sanctity of life and all that—but I don't think it can be divorced from women's lives in this society," Pollitt said.

Leaving aside for a moment the wrenching emotional issues, one obvious burden is economics. Having a child—even one put up for adoption—costs not only trauma but time and money, and takes them from women, not men. The financial burden is one reason why poor women are more likely to have abortions than others.

But the same inequity is true among professional women. To return to the Arnold & Porter Christmas party tryst, what would happen if the female associate does the right thing by prolife standards and decides to have the child? At $65,000 a year, she can certainly afford to do it, and her insurance is probably blue chip. But in the eyes of some senior partners, the luster of her earlier promise begins to fade. They may be reluctant to keep her on certain accounts, for fear of offending the clients. What's more, even if the clients understand, she'll be missing at least six to eight weeks of work—just, as fate would have it, when she's needed in court on an important case. The long-term penalties may be overestimated—good employees are in short demand in most professions; it's the marginal who will suffer the most—but the fears are nonetheless real. What's more, the burden is unequally shared. Her tryst-ee suffers no such repercussions. The clients love him, he shines in court, and his future seems

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assured. Unfair? Yes, extremely.

These inequities are one reason why the right-to-life movement has the obligation, often shirked, to support measures that would make it easier for women of all incomes to go through pregnancy—health care, maternity leave, parental leave, day care, protections against employment discrimination. But even if all these things were provided—as they should be—it's unlikely that the strength of feminist feeling on abortion would recede. Economic opportunity is an important facet of the abortion debate, but it's not, finally, at its core. Of all the women I spoke with, the one I most expected to forward an economic argument was Barbara Ehrenreich—since she is co-chair of Democratic Socialists of America—but she never mentioned it. When I finally asked her about it she said that no amount of money or servants would change the essential moral equation, which centers, in her mind, on female autonomy. "The moral issue has to do with female personhood," she said.

Cruel choices

What surprised me in my talks with the female defenders of abortion, was how many of them seemed to view the abortion debate as some sort of referendum by which society judged women's deepest levels of self. Words like *guilt* and *sin*, *punishment* and *shame* kept issuing forth. They did so both about abortion and about sex in general. "The whole debate is more about the value of women's lives and the respect we have for women than it is about the act of abortion itself," said Kate Michelman, the head of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

A few days before my scheduled meeting with Michelman, I got a phone call from her press secretary. "We hear a nasty rumor," she said, "that you're writing something that says abortion is immoral." I mentioned the rumor when I sat down to speak with Michelman, who quickly told me about the very difficult circumstances surrounding her own abortion. Her first husband had walked out on her and her three small children when she was destitute, ill, and pregnant. She had to make a difficult moral judgment, she said, weighing her responsibilities to her family against those to the fetus. Then, this being 1970, she couldn't even make the decision herself but had to obtain the consent of a panel of doctors and then, to further the pain, get her ex-husband's signature. Call me immoral, she seemed to say, in an I-dare-you way.

But it seemed to me that Michelman's decision, like those, certainly, of a great number of women, had involved a thoughtful handling of difficult questions—as she herself was underlining. "Sure the fetus has interests, absolutely," she said, as do other

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

Journalism Award

for January 1989 is presented to

Roger Simon
The Baltimore Sun

Simon's series revealed how Kurt Schmoke, the mayor of Baltimore, became the first major American politician to call for the decriminalization of drugs. Much of it, concludes Simon, was owing to his experience as a state attorney. "I looked at the jails and the prisons filling up," said Schmoke. "Every year there were bigger busts, but nothing ever got better."

Marjorie Williams
The Washington Post Magazine

Williams's profile of James Baker was simply the best, most in-depth treatment of the most important member of President Bush's cabinet.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to the best newspaper, magazine, television, or radio story (or series of stories) on our political system. Nominations for any newspaper, magazine, or radio or television station in the country are welcome. The subject can be government in its federal, state, or municipal manifestation.

The award for stories published or aired in February will be announced in the May issue. Nominations for stories published or aired in March will close April 15. The winner will be announced in the June issue. Two copies of the article or broadcast text should accompany the nomination.

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things, like a woman's commitments to her family and her health. It was only when I began asking why those leading the prochoice movement didn't discuss these moral tensions more often that her reasoning turned curious and defensive.

"The ethical questions are being raised," she said. "And if [a woman] makes a decision [to have an abortion] then she's made the right decision."

I asked her how she knew. With 1.6 million abortions a year, there seems to be a lot of room for error.

Merely asking the question, she said, implied that women had abortions for frivolous reasons. "To even raise the question of when it's immoral," she said, "is to say that women can't make moral decisions."

> To one side, visions only of women in crisis. To the other, innocent children, chased by the steely needle.

In considering the way a legacy of injustice fuels the adamance over abortion, it is helpful to consider three generations of women: those who preceded the feminist movement of the late sixties and early seventies; those who soldiered in it; and those who inherited its gains. Each has faced the tyranny of a man's world in a way that primes passions about abortion, but each has done so in a different way.

Women who became sexually active outside of marriage in the days of blanket abortion bans faced a world prepared to hand them the cruelest choice: the life-wrecking stigma of pregnancy out-of-wedlock or the back alley; a "ruined" life or a potentially lethal trip through a netherworld. Men, meanwhile, made the decisions that crafted that world while escaping the brunt of its cruelty. That *was* an unjust life, and the triumph over it is among feminism's proudest achievements.

Feeling accused

The following account from a woman identified simply as Kathleen comes from *Back Rooms*, a recent collection of oral histories, and is worth quoting at length. It speaks for a tremendous number of women.

"It was the first and only time I was ever sexually intimate with this man. . . . He offered me a ring. . . . But I did not want to do that. . . . I thought about going to a home for unwed mothers and I thought about how my family would deal with it, how it would affect my college career, my scholarships, my job. . . . I couldn't even imagine telling my parents. . . . It was just unthinkable. . . . I just really couldn't put my family through the shame. . .

"Things at that time in Cleveland were very tight. . . I finally located an abortionist in Youngstown, Ohio. It was going to cost one hundred dollars. . .This so called doctor—this man who called himself a doctor—had two businesses. He was a bookie and he was an abortionist. He was an elderly man in a ramshackle little house in a disreputable, shabby section of Youngstown. . . . I don't recall seeing any medical certificates on the walls. I don't think anyone who was a doctor would also be a bookie. I think there was some actual gambling going on while we were waiting. . . .

"He had a room with a chair and stirrups set up. I went in and it was all very, very secretive. The money had to be in cash, in certain denominations. . . . He checked it very thoroughly to make sure it wasn't marked. . . . He explained that he was doing a saline injection and that there should be some cramping and that abortion would happen within 24 hours. . . . I don't know how many days passed. . . . But I do know that when I finally aborted I was alone in my room in the dormitory at school. I went through at least 12 hours of labor alone in my room. . . .

"It was more terrible than I ever imagined. . . . I remember noticing that the contractions were getting more frequent and more frequent, five minutes, then four minutes, then three minutes, and then there was a lot of blood and there was a fetus. . . . I remember taking this fetus and not knowing what else to do but flush it down the toilet. And I was terrified that it wasn't going to go down, and that it would clog up the system, that somehow, some way, I would be found out. The whole system would be clogged up. They'd have to call a plumber and then there would be this hunt to find out who did this terrible thing in the dorm, and I'd be tracked down and prosecuted. I was really in shock and just terrified."

A second generation of women share the memories of illegal abortion, but their perspective has been honed even finer by roles as activists. For these women—in their late thirties to late forties, which includes Ehrenreich, Pollitt, Gordon, Willis, and Michelman—the fight for other forms of feminist freedoms was linked to abortion not only

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MEMO OF THE MONTH

A Resolution Supporting Armed Forces Advertising
In Newspapers

WHEREAS, the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard spend millions of dollars each year on broadcast advertising to help attract recruits; and

WHEREAS, the armed forces public information offices distribute hundreds of thousands of news releases each year, which a great number of newspapers routinely publish at no charge; and

WHEREAS, top high school leaders are often recruited from small towns, rural areas, inner cities and other areas served by weekly and daily newspapers; and

WHEREAS, newspapers provide a strong communication link to the young people of the nation's towns and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, while newspapers will continue to publish hundreds of thousands of press releases free each year, newspapers also should be considered as a strong advertising medium to reach our nation's young people, along with television and radio advertising; and be it therefore

RESOLVED that we, the member newspapers of the Florida Press Association, respectfully request that the marketing managers who decide how to spend the public's money on the recruitment of personnel for our nation's armed forces should strongly consider the option of using newspaper advertising in their advertising mix; and be it also

RESOLVED that the Florida Press Association and other state newspaper associations stand ready to assist our armed forces marketing experts in effectively including newspaper advertising in their recruitment campaigns; and be it also

RESOLVED that this resolution should be sent to the Florida Congressional delegation, to the National Newspaper Association, and to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

P. E. Cardiff

Peter Cardiff, President
Florida Press Association

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intellectually but through political experience. "My early involvement in the women's movement was involvement in the health movement," says Ehrenreich. Reproductive rights, including birth control, were at the center of the feminist movement of the late sixties and early seventies, and the battles to win them were hard fought. Such experiences aren't likely to lead to a lot of second-guessing.

Nor, for that matter, is the fact that so many women (of many different ages) have had abortions. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 46 percent of American women will have an abortion before menopause, and more than a third of those will have had more than one. During my telephone conversation with Barbara Ehrenreich I asked her why she thought there wasn't more discussion of whether abortion is an acceptable type of killing. She sounded incredulous. "That's a when-did-you-stop-beating-your-wife question," she said. "I've had two abortions—do you want to call me a murderer?"

In retrospect, I regretted my use of the word "killing." I hadn't meant it as an accusation, though, perhaps understandably, that's the way she heard it. I explained that I had in mind a great difference between the word "killing," which I regarded as neutral and descriptive, and "murder," a legal term meant to describe killing of a very narrow and wrongful sort. This is a problem that makes all discussion of abortion so difficult. I no more think Barbara Ehrenreich or other women who've had abortions are murderers than I think that of people who support capital punishment—there are people I respect and admire greatly in both groups. It's difficult to raise moral qualms about abortion, perhaps especially for a man, without a great number of women feeling accused of something quite serious, even if accusation is not one's intent at all.

Stallions and diaphragms

Women my age—I'm 28—haven't had to worry about back rooms. To a significant extent, too, they no longer face a life-wrecking stigma from a pregnancy outside of marriage (though this still varies greatly with individual circumstance). They have inherited the gains—more economic opportunity, fewer social barriers—that earlier feminists helped secure, and while this is a very good thing there is at least one sense in which that legacy contains some ambiguity: to some extent women were the losers in the sexual revolution. This is true in at least two ways. For one, much of the culture still remains ambivalent about female sexuality, acknowledging its legitimacy while at the same time distrusting it. Secondly, while the legitimation of sex without commitment was sought by women as well as men, men pursue it more often, and women are more vulnerable to its effects.

I ran this theory past Kate Michelman, and she bought it without a blink: "Men want sex, require sex, they use sex to. . . ." Her thoughts outpaced her words. "Women are less needful of actual sexual intercourse. Women are more needful of intimacy and closeness, while men drive right in there, you know. They want *sex*. I don't know how men and women ever get together you know. We're very different. But the ultimate impact really falls on women."

> Abortion's neat fit with other liberal concerns creates a package-politics tug.

More evidence of the way men's sexual behavior feeds the feminist fervor on abortion comes from a Katha Pollitt piece in *Mother Jones*. Entitled [Nat] "Hentoff, Are You Listening?" it answers Hentoff's attacks in the *Voice* on women who have abortions after deciding that giving birth, in Hentoff's words, would be "just plain inconvenient."

"Rather than fulminate against women, about whose lives he seems to know little," Pollitt wrote, "would it not be more seemly for Hentoff to direct his moral fervor toward his brothers?" To help him along, Pollitt composed a sample speech for Hentoff to take on the road. It's worth listening to in detail, for the list it offers of women's legitimate gripes:

"Men! Abortion is a terrible thing, and it behooves us to ensure that there are as few as possible. . . .That means no more extramarital affairs, no more sleeping with our students, no more one-night stands. Should the marriage fail, let's vow to cheerfully continue to support every child we father until that child is 21—we have a bad record there, what with three-fourths of divorced dads reneging on court-ordered child support. . . .

"Now comes the hard part. . . .It goes without saying that we're mounting a major campaign to make male birth control the chief medical priority of our time. . . .vasectomies for you guys who can't

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> "Women are more needful of intimacy and closeness," Michelman said, "while men drive right in there. They want *sex*."

live with the conditions I've outlined above, and, for the rest of us—condoms! They're messy, they diminish pleasure, but so what? How can we blame women for having 'convenience abortions' if we won't put up with a little inconvenience to prevent unwanted pregnancy? In fact, since condoms have been known to break, let's wear two at a time!"

"None of this will amount to anything, though, if we don't change our attitudes about sex as well. Face it men, we give women mixed messages. So from now on, let's never call a woman frigid if she won't sleep with us without commitment, or promiscuous if she takes a diaphragm with her when she goes out for a date. As for men who sleep around, let's think of them not as stallions bursting with vitality but as hit-and-run artists so irresponsible they don't even know how many fetuses they scatter about. . . ."

Accepting female sexuality

One could scarcely ask for a better example of the way the male "stallion" legacy makes feminists angry about abortion. And rightly so. But what's interesting about the observations of male irresponsibility, as it relates to abortion, is that both sides cite it. Prolife feminists, like Juli Loesch, argue that the acceptance of abortion actually *encourages* exploitation. The "hit and run" artist can pony up $200, send a woman off to a clinic, and imagine himself to have done the gallant thing. "The idea is that a man can use a woman, vacuum her out, and she's ready to be used again," Loesch says. "It's like a rent-a-car or something." (In such scenarios, Loesch argues, abortion has the same blame-the-victim effect that the Left is typically quick to condemn, with the victimized mother perpetrating the injustice through violence against the fetus.)

When I asked Katha Pollitt about this, she dismissed it with the argument that men will be just as irresponsible with or without abortion, and that the only difference will be the burden left to women. To some extent she's right: irresponsible sexual behavior—by men and women both—will no doubt continue under any imaginable scenario. Then again, it's not unreasonable to suspect that casual attitudes about abortion, particularly among men, could increase precisely the kind of "stallion" behavior that Pollitt rightly protests. And abortion can become a tool of male coercion in other ways as well. "He said that if I didn't have an abortion, the relationship would be over," a friend recently explained. Many women have experienced the same.

Of course, feminist emotion toward abortion isn't just a reaction to male sexuality but also an assertion that women's own sexual drive is equally legitimate. Feminists argue that antiabortion arguments reflect a larger cultural ambivalence, if not outright hostility, toward female sexuality. This is where words like *guilt* and *shame* and *punishment* continue to arise. I recently sat down with Katha Pollitt for a long conversation about abortion. She cited the many ways in which women (and the children antiabortionists want them to raise) are injured by society: poor health care, poor housing, economic discrimination, male abuse. We talked also about power, politics, religion, and the other forces that play into the abortion debate, like the unflagging responsibilities that come with parenthood. (She is a new, and proud, mother.) But when I asked her which, of the many justifications for abortion, she felt most deeply—what, in her mind, was the real core of the issue—her answer surprised me. "Deep down," she said, "what I believe is that children should not be a punishment for having sex."

Ellen Willis of the *Voice* advances a similar argument. Opposition to abortion, she's written, is cut of the same cloth as the more general "virginity fetishism, sexual guilt and panic and disgrace" foisted on women by a repressive society. The woman's fight for abortion without qualm, she says, is part of the fight for the "acceptance of the erotic impulse, and one's own erotic impulses, as fundamentally benign and necessary for human happiness."

Pollitt agreed. "The notion of female sexuality being expressed is something people have deeply contradictory feelings about," Pollitt said. And her example to Hentoff of diaphragms and dates—damned

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if you bring one, damned if you don't—shows she's right.

An unspoken assumption

Pollitt and other leading feminists are right about a lot of things—right to point to the terrible past of stigma and dirty needles; right to complain of sexual exploitation; of double standards; of economic discrimination; of a shortage of birth control; of a society that places them in too many binds. Only one question remains: what about the fetus?

Do we have any moral obligations to it? What are they? What happens after the birth control fails, the egg becomes fertilized and implanted, and human life begins to unfold?

►"Maybe I'm a cold and heartless person," said Pollitt, "but I find it hard to think of it as a moral question, the right to life of this thing the size of a fingernail."

►"Would I feel comfortable getting rid of a fetus in the first few months of its life? Yes, indeed," said Ehrenreich. "And I have done it without qualm."

►"To say, 'I support the legal right but I'm against it morally' is still to deny women's equality," said Willis. "If you have some inherent moral bias in favor of fetuses it becomes a moral bias against the woman. There's no way you can give the fetus a claim, even a relative claim, without denying the woman's selfhood. You make the woman a vessel."

At the risk of taking these women at less than their word, I can't help but wonder if they believe this—if they truly believe the moral questions are as simple as they say.

Katha Pollitt said, "It's hard for me to imagine circumstances in which I'd have an abortion at this time in my life," with this-time-in-her-life meaning at age 39, happily married, professionally established, and prosperous. But "not for moral reasons" she said. And she quickly insisted—twice—that she "would never condemn another woman for having an abortion."

Next, she conjured a hypothetical example. Picture a friend, five months pregnant. The friend's husband, Bob, runs off with a 19-year-old flame. The friend comes to Katha Pollitt for advice.

"I would tell her to go ahead and have it, I'll help you," Pollitt said.

Surprised, I interrupted her to ask why.

"A woman in the fifth month of pregnancy is going to have strong feelings," she said.

Again—why?

She mixed up her words. "The baby. . .the fetus. . . ." Then she paused and said she would tell her friend to have the abortion if she had a heart condition and would be bedridden or endangered by the pregnancy.

> If the Left thinks killing criminals is wrong, then what about fetuses? At least the criminals have done something wrong.

And if she didn't have a heart condition?

"Just because Bob is leaving—why shouldn't she have the child?" she said. "I'd say, 'Fuck you Bob, I'm going to go ahead and hire a lawyer and take you for everything you're worth.' "

When I asked her about this example a few weeks later—didn't her instinct to tell her friend to have the baby indicate the fetus had some innate worth?—Pollitt said there'd been an unspoken assumption in the scenario: "What I was saying is that if she wanted to have the baby until this rat walked out—why should he stop her?" But there seemed to be another unspoken assumption as well, that the fetus had some interests of its own—not enough to overrule, say, the mother's heart condition, but not to be easily ignored either. And why—if abortion is so neutral—would Katha Pollitt herself now find it hard to imagine herself ever having one?

Biology and destiny

What the argument for abortion-without-qualm comes down to is this: the fetus doesn't exist unless we want it to. But the whole crisis over abortion is that we know precisely the opposite to be true. It's there physically, feminists say, but not morally. But how could it be one without the other—there to nurture one day (remember, plenty of fresh vegetables, we're eating for three: you, baby, and placenta), but free to dismember the next? Qualm-less advocates argue that all that finally matters is whether the woman, for whatever reason, desires to bring it in-

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to the world. Yet the fetus is already there, no matter what we plan or desire. Forces may conspire against a woman and leave her *unable* to bring it into the world, or unable to do so without a great deal of harm to herself and others. That is, *other* moral obligations may overrule. But it is suspicious in the extreme to argue—as the qualmlessness position does—that our moral obligations are nothing more than what we want them to be, a wish-it-away view of the world. Inconveniently fetuses exist, quite outside our fluctuating emotions and desires.

Finally, Ellen Willis's argument that by giving fetuses any moral status at all we reduce women to vessels breaks down because women *are* vessels. They're not *just* vessels. They're much more than vessels. But the attempt to reconcile the just desire for full female autonomy with our moral obligations toward fetuses by insisting that we have none attempts to wish away a very real collision; it refuses to acknowledge a (so far) inalterable conflict buried in biology. Willis argues this is precisely the oppressive "biology equals destiny" argument that feminism has fought to overturn. Biology doesn't equal destiny; but it does affect destiny, and it leaves us with the extremely difficult fact that women, for any number of reasons, get burdened with unwanted pregnancies to which there are no easy moral solutions. Something important is lost—female autonomy or fetal life—in either event.

There are two highly imperfect ways of dealing with this conflict. The first is abstinence (since birth control fails). But not much chance of that. The second is adoption—another imperfect solution. The first argument against it is that there aren't enough parents to go around, particularly for minority and handicapped children. Ironically those quickest to point this out tend to be those for whom putting up a child for adoption really is a plausible option—white professionals. George Bush's "adoption not abortion" line brought quick ridicule by Pollitt in *The Nation* and Ehrenreich in *Mother Jones*. He's wrong to suggest it as a panacea—babies would quickly outstrip parents, as Pollitt insists—but right to encourage its wider use. The real challenge for liberals and progressives would be to turn the thought back toward Bush, and demand the governmental support, in health care and other ways, needed to get through pregnancy, and needed to raise a child.

The second argument against adoption focuses not on demand but supply: nine months of illness culminating in a "physiological crisis which is occasionally fatal and almost always excrutiatingly painful," as Ehrenreich has written. And other worries follow; think of Lisa Steinberg. "It's almost unimaginable to me to think about giving up the baby," said Ehrenreich. "Talk about misery. Talk about 20 years of grief and ambivalence." The grief is real—particularly for people of conscience, like Ehrenreich. (And people of conscience are the targets of moral suasion in the first place.) But where does that argument lead? That in order to spare a child the risks of an adoptive life, we offer the kindness of a suction machine?

"A very scary time"

A few years ago, I was sharing an apartment with a friend who became pregnant just before breaking up with her fiance. Like many men—like the hypothetical Bob—he just walked away, dealing with the dilemma through denial. My friend dealt with it with a lot of courage. I called her recently to see how the experience seemed in retrospect, and perhaps she should provide the coda, since her view complicates both Ehrenreich's position and my own. Though she said that putting her child up for adoption was "the right thing," she said she "would never, ever, pressure someone to go through the same thing."

It surprised me to hear her say that abortion "crossed my mind several thousand times," since that was the one option she had seemed to rule out from the start. When she realized she was pregnant, she said, she went riding her bicycle into potholes "trying to jar something loose. It was very, very easy for me to think of the sperm and the egg as having just joined. It was like a piece of mucous to me." She decided against abortion after about a week, "a very lonely, very scary time."

"At some point, I realized I was old enough, and mature enough, that I could do it [have the baby]," she said, but she emphasized that this calculus could have been altered easily by any number of factors—including less support from family and friends, a less understanding employer, or the lack of medical care. She spent months in counseling trying to decide whether to raise the child or put it up for adoption, and the decision to give the baby away "was the most difficult thing I've ever had to do." Since the baby was healthy and white the adoption market was on her side—"I could have dictated that I wanted two Finnish socialists," she said—and her certainty that the new parents would not only love the child but pass on certain shared values was an essential thing to know.

"When I think about her," she said, "just the miracle of being able to have brought her into this life, even if she's not here with me right now, she's with people who love her. It's a miracle."

"When she left to go to her adoptive parents, it was the most devastating and wonderful thing," she said. "I kept thinking this is my child, and I love her.

"It always kept coming back to that—I love her."□

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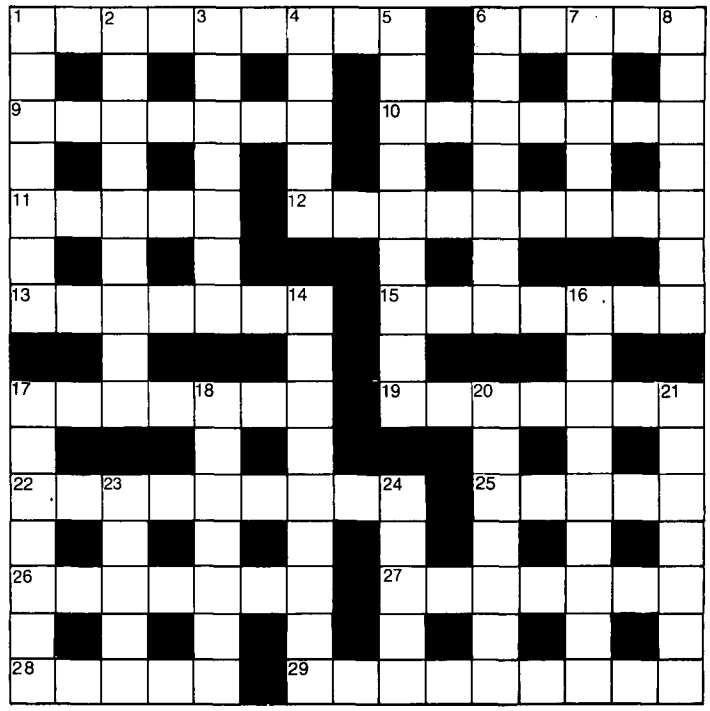
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



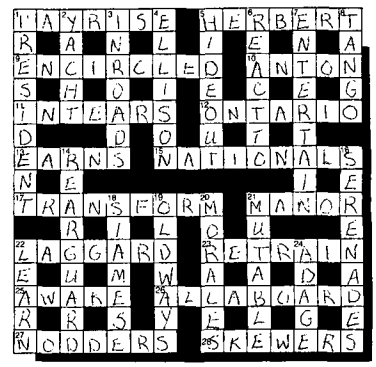
ACROSS

1. Facility building subject of intense Senate scrutiny. (4,5)
6. Take in physician fluid. (5)
9. Plains family displays crest around Arkansas. (7)
10. Notices posted for part of class. (7)
11. Diets carefully placed. (5)
12. Feeble dice a team threw. (9)
13. Icon disturbed going around disturbed going around. (7)
15. Wandering hero met a proposition. (7)
17. Computer type puts 1,000 in restored depots. (7)
19. Should physician reverse water shortage? (7)
22. Great event shattering places, etc. (9)
25. Studio furnishing put on lease. (5)
26. Movie alien took in verse about high point. (7)
27. Disorderly gulpers go off on a spree. (7)
28. Fruity appointments? (5)
29. Acts with another, cooks iron specs. (9)

DOWN

1. Democratic candidate approaches hole in Wyoming. (7)
2. Same third mishandled depression. (4,5)
3. Went certain way to deter North Dakota unfairly. (7)
4. Scattered sweat is severe environmental problem. (5)
5. Began once more to clumsily arrest Massachusetts Senator. (9)
6. Plastic made cult die horribly. (7)
7. Do it carefully around one simpleton. (5)
8. Mink god resurrected for major division of natural objects. (7)
14. Fortunate ice pact company reorganization. (9)
16. College official cooked rare grits. (9)
17. Did bring nets up inside? Swell! (7)
18. Child takes rest fitfully and almost falls. (7)
20. Channel el vapor to have something in common. (7)
21. Farmers determining ship courses? (7)
23. Choose oral vote's predecessor. (5)
24. Directions only for German industrial city. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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What The Washington Post Could Learn from Sports Illustrated

(And vice versa)

by Matthew Cooper

If you haven't read John Feinstein, you're missing a lot of fun. He's one of those writers who loves something so much, and talks about it so vividly, that you can't help but find yourself caught up in the excitement. This kind of infectious enthusiasm has made him rich in acclaim as the country's best college basketball writer. It's made him rich, too. *A Season on the Brink*, his story of Indiana University coach Bob Knight, rode the *Times* bestseller list for 25 weeks.

This time Feinstein takes on a broader subject—an entire season of college basketball.* By weaving together profiles and you-are-there accounts of games into a diary, he tries to capture what he calls the unique "culture" of the game. During the 1987-1988 season, Feinstein went native. He hung out in motels and locker rooms with officials like Rusty Herring, whose license plate reads "Luv2ref." He went court-side with lesser players and with stars like Steve Kerr of the University of Arizona whose father, the president of American University in Beirut, had been assassinated; the 22-year-old then had to endure chants of "PLO, PLO" when his team took on rival Arizona State. He studied how Danny Manning's metamorphosis from great player to *great leader* took the Kansas Jayhawks to victory in the national championship.

But while Feinstein lauds what's lovable about college basketball, he barely mentions what ails it—the abysmal SAT scores; the abysmal graduation rates; the drugs; or the insidious effect that big money has on 18-year-old kids and dollar-starved colleges. It's not that Feinstein is blind to the seamy side of college ball. He covered it for 11 years at *The Washington Post* and is currently a special contributor to *Sports Illustrated*. But here he's chosen instead to celebrate the sport rather than give it the warts-and-all treatment.

Even if it is a one-sided view, other journalists, including those beyond the sports desk, can still find a lot to learn from Feinstein's dogged reporting, lively style, and, perhaps above all, his acute sense of organizational culture. These qualities are what mark top-notch sportswriting like his—a genre too quickly dismissed by other writers. The condescension toward sportswriters as a gang of good-timin', would-be jocks found typical expression recently in

Matthew Cooper is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

**A Season Inside: One Year in College Basketball.* John Feinstein. *Villard, $18.95.*

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an editorial in *The New Republic*. Criticizing the sportswriters' coverage of the protest of NCAA rules by Coach John Thompson of Georgetown, the magazine opined that recent columns served as "a reminder of why society generally confines sports writers to the sports page." This back-to-your-locker-rooms-boys view is ironic not least because the qualities that sportswriting embodies—vivid prose, deft narration, point-of-view—are precisely those that good political writers, from *The New Republic* to the newsweeklies, have increasingly displayed. And others could stand to display it more: even greats like David Broder could learn a trick or two from Feinstein. The opposite is true as well—Feinstein and his sports-desk colleagues could learn from political skeptics too.

The one lesson political writers *don't* need to heed might be called the George Will Fallacy—the idea that sportswriting is best when elevated to the level of parable. ("Life is vain, the world a moral void, the universe an empty shell," Will writes, in a self-mocking style he can ill afford, since it comes so close to the real thing. "Then proper Americans look toward April, the horizon where the sun will rise. The sun is baseball.") Will's baseball chauvinism—flaunted, paradoxically, to prove both that he's a regular guy and smart—gets impossible to swallow after a while. By writing more about the symbolism of the game than the substance, Will and other intellectuals miss the point about sportswriting: it doesn't need embellishment to be sophisticated.

Hurling panties

The most obvious thing that grabs you about Feinstein's book is the sheer number of great lines. "Rollie Massimino of Villanova is known as the Danny DeVito of coaches," writes Feinstein. "It doesn't matter how many thousands of dollars he spends on clothes, he always looks like an unmade bed by the end of the game." And this nuanced notion: "Because basketball is still a newfound obsession in the desert, the crowd at Arizona games is still more innocent than those back East or in the Midwest. . . . Fathers take their sons instead of their bosses."

Lines like these are part of a rich tradition of colorful sportswriting—a legacy of metaphor and narrative that was a bellwether for the New Journalism. Before there was Tom Wolfe or David Halberstam there was Red Smith, the *New York Times* sportswriter, who didn't just describe a deep catch but wrote that the outfielder "stayed aloft so long he looked like an empty uniform hanging in its locker."

But, beyond the prose, Feinstein has a good sense of organizational behavior. Being a basketball writer means you get to write a lot about teams, about how a group of people get along or don't get along and why. This seems like an obvious point, but the ability to capture the personality of organizations is a quality that has distinguished political classics like Timothy Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus* or Teddy White's *The Making of the President—1960*, two of the first books to unveil the workings of presidential campaigns. A lot more of today's political writing has this attention to organizational forces than it used to—think of all the stories about Susan Estrich's feuding with John Sasso. But a scrutiny of organizational behavior—asking not just what happens but probing the institutional whys—can still be put to much greater use by those who cover politics and government.

When I worked at the Civil Rights Commission between 1984 and 1986, I was amazed at how few reporters, even those covering it as part of a regular beat, conveyed any sense of the internecine warfare in our offices—not just the familiar rankling between commissioners appointed by Reagan and the holdovers from Carter but among Reagan appointees. (Some, for example, opposed all race-preference programs; others took a more case-by-case approach.) It wasn't until John Bunzel, a Reagan-appointed commissioner, called on Chairman Clarence Pendleton to resign that people got the idea that the Reagan appointees were not a unified block on issues like the ERA or set-asides. What's more, the palpable tension between careerists and political appointees never seemed to make its way into print.

Feinstein conveys a great understanding of how teams work, especially the intangible, psychological dimensions of the game. Everyone's heard of the home-field advantage, but Feinstein has the subtlety to point out why it's such a big deal in college basketball. For one thing, the sport is played on an intimate scale compared to the stadiums that engulf football and baseball, so the crowd is much more of a presence. In such small confines, the special exuberance of a college mob—its bands, its cheers—can really affect a game. In 1984 at Duke, for instance, students hurled condoms and panties at a Maryland player who had been accused of sexual assaults. Rebuked for that, the students came back against North Carolina—skipping the "bullshit" cheer in favor of "We beg to differ," and, instead of waving their arms at foul shooters, holding up signs saying, "Please miss." One's behavior, group or otherwise, is bound to be affected by flying Trojans.

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Danny Manning's laundry

There's another side to organizational behavior—and that's leadership and morale. A recent example of the sportswriter's sensitivity to this was the *Sports Illustrated* cover story on Mario Lemieux, who's leading the National Hockey League in scoring. "As Great as Gretzky?" the headline asked, referring to the NHL star, Wayne Gretzky. The author, Austin Murphy, resisted the temptation to write a puff piece on Lemieux, and concluded instead that his occasional slacking off and failure to inspire his teammates makes him less of a player than Gretzky, who brings out the best in his teammates. (After he came to the Los Angeles Kings this year, Gretzky helped make the franchise a respectable second place contender in their division.)

During the basketball season Feinstein covered, nowhere was leadership more important than in the case of Danny Manning, the star of the University of Kansas team.

Before his senior year, Manning was already one of the game's greats, but until the last season he had been inconsistent. Back when he was the only starting freshman, Manning didn't take the lead, for fear of riling the older players. And he was easily distracted himself.

By his senior year, the tension between Head Coach Larry Brown and Manning was, as Feinstein describes, almost a Hollywood story of the tough-but-concerned coach who gets his kids to be all they can be. One time Brown came down hard on Manning for not breaking up a locker-room fight. "You sit there and watch like one of the guys," he told Manning. "Goddamn it, when are you going to realize you're *not* one of the guys!"

During the course of the year, circumstances conspired to make Manning a leader. Two of his teammates got hit with injuries, placing even more pressure on him. Also, Manning faced the challenge of playing in the Olympics that summer. And, perhaps most importantly, it was his senior year—the last chance he'd have to take the Jayhawks all the way. What's more it was the last time he would work with his Dad, who was an assistant coach with the team. Feinstein captures the transition to adulthood with a deceptively simple quote: "I think I've grown up a lot," Manning told Feinstein. "Before, when I needed my laundry done, I took it home and let my mother do it. Now, I do it myself. If I ran out of food, I just went home for dinner.

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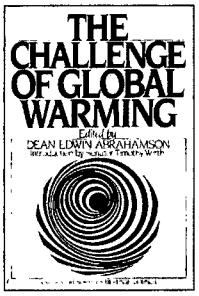

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I don't do that anymore."

By the time the Final Four rolls around, Manning has hit his stride, scoring 31 points in one game and shouting instructions like a field sergeant. By themselves, the points tell only part of the story; in Feinstein's hands, the important thing is that chemistry—between coach and star; between star and teammates—explains more than meets the eye. It was the chemistry that was missing from the coverage of the Civil Rights Commission and that continues to be missed in much metro and national reporting.

Obviously, the importance of chemistry can be overemphasized. This year, two winning teams in the National Basketball Association, the New York Knicks and the Detroit Pistons made big trades at mid-season in the hope of gaining an extra edge. The fear among fans in both cities was that the acquisitions would mess up the chemistry. But the former ball player Jerry West described it best when he said that while chemistry is important, talent is more so. Feinstein has a good appreciation of this. There's a lot of personality in this book, but he's not so enthralled with the psychological dimension of the game that he forgets to tell you basics, like who can shoot and who can't.

The rapid deployment force

Where Feinstein goes wrong is where many reporters in all fields have problems: he is too kind to his sources. Not that Feinstein is a deferential kind of guy. His book on Bob Knight captured his notorious chair-throwing temper. But *A Season Inside* won't earn Feinstein any threats. Aside from skirting the drug and money and race issues—which is a little like saying, "aside from Watergate"—it's hard to see why any coach would take umbrage at what Feinstein wrote.

Amazingly, Feinstein goes easy on Lefty Dreisell, the University of Maryland coach who was forced out after the cocaine-related death of star Len Bias. "Dreisell had made mistakes," is about the harshest thing Feinstein can think to say, adding that the administration shared blame for the abysmal academic standing of players and other problems that emerged after Bias's death. But even if Dreisell is guilty of what Feinstein allows—failing to watch out for his kids' grades and recruiting players who were academically unqualified—this is still a heavy burden that deserves more comment. Yet Feinstein devotes most of his chapter on Dreisell to an account of the two of them bar hopping with a pack of fans. There's no law that says every piece of writing has to be an expose or a hatchet job. (Indeed, most political reporters have become so cynical that they would feel embarrassed turning out a celebratory book like this.) But Feinstein goes too far—not only failing to give a skeptical, hard-news treatment of the issues raised by Dreisell's demise but actually lauding him as "funny and charming and self-deprecating." If you're going to compose a rhapsody, dedicate it to Fenway Park or something unqualifiedly good.

When it comes to saying nice things about the important source, Feinstein's not alone. After she finished her three-year stint covering the Redskins for *The Washington Post*, Christine Brennan wrote a tell-all piece for the paper's Sunday magazine. Readers were treated to great stories, about players coming on to her, about management's attempt to quash her stories, about who was decent and who gave her a hard time. Jack Kent Cooke, the team's owner, sounded half nuts when Brennan tried to interview him about a pending trade. It's not entirely Brennan's fault. Had she run with any of those stories earlier, her access would have shut down. But this pressure toward deference is one of the faults of the beat system, and it makes it clear why it's so important for news organizations to have not only beat reporters but also a rapid deployment force, off the beat, which can burn bridges without regret. Little wonder, then, that *Sports Illustrated* said that David Halberstam's book on pro basketball, *The Breaks of the Game*, "asked the tough questions most NBA reporters are afraid to ask." Questions about money, race, and the impact of television. Questions that Feinstein poses in only the most superficial way. (Feinstein will occasionally make a snide reference to CBS or Dick Vitale, but that's about it for how TV affects the game.)

It's telling that Feinstein never turns his considerable reporting talents on the policy makers in the NCAA. He fires off a lot of quips about silly rules but never seems as comfortable wrestling with academic standards and other questions of policy as he does with the action going on at courtside. In that way, he seems to have much in common with other sportswriters, who are only now starting to write about business and race and other important matters with the sophistication that the best political writers have long displayed.

Despite these flaws, this is a great time of year to read Feinstein, now that the NCAA tournament is underway. It's also worth picking up because any week now we're going to get a George Will column about baseball comparing opening day to The Resurrection. Feinstein understands that by just writing about the sport itself in a clear and simple manner, by just telling the story—the reader will know how good it is. That's Feinstein's achievement. And it's a big one. □

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When They Forgot the Nuts and Bolts, Everybody Got Screwed

How one American company was killed by greed, incompetence, and Henry Kravis

by Mark Reutter

Fred Burg was an enlightened tinkerer, an inventor, who built his company from nothing into the largest maker of machine tools west of the Mississippi.

Gerald Saltarelli was an auto bumper mogul who folded firms into his conglomerate, confident that he could improve any enterprise. In 1965 he bought Fred Burg's company.

Henry Kravis was a young investment banker who peddled an obscure financial device—the leveraged buyout (LBO). In 1978, a decade before he splashed onto the pages of *BusinessWeek* and *Time* as "King Henry" for his record $24.88 billion takeover of RJR Nabisco (and earned ink for his opulent lifestyle with his designer wife, Carolyne Roehm), Kravis and his associates took Saltarelli's publicly held firm and turned it private. It was the largest LBO to date. Staggering under the load of debt piled on by the financiers, the firm spun out of control after the 1982 recession. Fred Burg's company was a victim of the floundering LBO: drained of its cash—and reputation—it was shut down and its equipment auctioned off.

At the time of Burg's collapse in 1985, the shrinking of America's manufacturing base was seen as inevitable. According to conventional wisdom, machine tools, steel, textiles, and rubber could not compete with more modern foreign mills. American companies were too inefficient, too old, or paid union wages that were too high to make it in the global marketplace.

That was the sad-but-true school. The not-so-sad school said that, while shutting down plants was tough on some companies and workers, it was good for the country. The United States should phase out heavy industry, it was argued, let other nations do the dirty work, and move into high tech and services.

Max Holland's important new book* adds to the growing research that calls into question the view that America's manufacturing woes were the inevitable consequence of progress, or in the words of the famous economist Joseph Schumpeter, "creative destruction." Instead, focusing on the growth and self-destruction of a single machine foundry, Holland draws out in convincing detail how cupidity, short-sightedness, and managerial hubris led to the rusting away of a superior organization.

Today the Japanese—ironically using the blueprints sold to them by Burg and others—dominate the market for the most advanced machine tools. Why is this important? Reliance on foreign know-how is costly. America's trade deficit in machine-related goods is more than $20 billion. More importantly, machine tools are the lynchpin of a nation's industrial base. Without these machines-that-build-other-machines, we can only fall further behind.

The "Hey, Joe" School

For those who believe that steel-based goods belong to the industrial scrap heap, the story of Fred Burg will come as a surprise. A machinist and garage tinkerer, he developed a unique turret drill that reliably combined several steps. His drill permitted other manufacturers to make their products cheaper, quicker, and better.

Borrowing $5,000 from his sister, he went into business in the late 1940s. By 1954, his annual sales were $500,000; six years later they had jumped to more than $4 million. Holland celebrates Fred Burg as an exemplar of the American inventor—a loner "who takes previously disparate elements and fuses them together in a classical and enduring combination." While sounding a bit corny, his characterization rings true. Burg was an unhappy man on the days he couldn't get his hands dirty. His enthusiasm and intimate knowledge of the trade soon attracted

Mark Reutter is the author of Sparrows Point: Making Steel—The Rise and Ruin of American Industrial Might.

* *When the Machine Stopped: A Cautionary Tale from Industrial America.* Max Holland. *Harvard Business School Press, $22.95.*

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employees—including Holland's own father—who became intensely loyal to the suburban Los Angeles company, even though it paid less than competing firms. Burg was an autocrat all right, thinking nothing of giving a machinist a rush job that needed hours to complete, then coming back in 15 minutes and, peering over his shoulder, asking, "How is it going?" His "style" of management wasn't slick; it was to get the job done right.

With Fred Burg setting the tone at the top, pride flowed naturally through the ranks. "When we designed new machines, he would bring in everyone he thought could contribute," remembers designer Bob French. "I would sit there with colored pencils, thinking, and he would be asking for ideas from everyone who worked on machines."

"We were entrepreneurs," agreed machinist Ed Merk.

When the workers voted to be represented by the United Steelworkers, the old man was furious. But the arrival of the union was of less consequence than might be imagined. Because trust had been forged between the front office and labor, wage negotiations were amiable and the management-employee Christmas party continued to be the high point of the year.

A similar optimism pervaded the industry. U.S. machine toolmakers thrived in the early 1960s. Unrivaled in the world, they had introduced a radical new tool called numerical control, or NC. It used coded instructions (such as punched tapes) to direct drill press operations without human oversight. In 1957, Burg's company had been one of the first to introduce NC machines. Financing expansion, though, became a headache. In the past, Burg and his business partners, his son Joe and his son-in-law Norm Ginsburg, had dipped into retained earnings or taken out bank loans, pledging their personal assets as collateral. But that didn't seem feasible when Burgmaster (named after its famous turret drill) was surging forward by 20 percent or more a year.

Enter Jerry Saltarelli, the chairman and CEO of Houdaille Industries (pronounced WHO-dye and named after a French engineer). Saltarelli was playing the hottest game then on Wall Street—conglomeration. In the early 1960s, antitrust laws had erected strong barriers against concentration of ownership in a single industry. But there were no restrictions against buying up unrelated, existing companies. A conglomerate got around reviews by the Justice Department. Another incentive was the tax code. Mergers or acquisitions made through stock swaps were tax-free.

Buoyed by the go-go stock market of the sixties, Saltarelli had diversified Houdaille into construction materials, engineering services, chemical feeders, lubricating machinery, hand tools, and punch presses. He got the Burgs' attention by offering them aid in the matter of expansion. He proposed a new consolidated factory and sent out Houdaille engineers to help with the planning, "no strings attached." Saltarelli began talking about the "synergism" between Burg and Houdaille, synergism being a much-touted selling point for conglomeration. In October 1965 Burg stock was exchanged for Houdaille stock in a friendly takeover.

The new management was different. Houdaille executives who visited the factory were shocked by the Burgs' loose management structure. Most astounding to Saltarelli's circle was the absence of college degrees among top Burg veterans. Modern, professional management could not tolerate such relics of the "Hey, Joe" school of production; henceforth, a supervisor without a high school diploma was blocked from advancement no matter how good he was on the job. Houdaille acted as though "we didn't know how to do anything," a supervisor complained to the author.

Under the new regime, management's focus turned to monthly forecasts and budgets. Prior to the takeover, quotas and budgets, insofar as they existed, were flexible. Out went intuition. In came procedures and paperwork. Fred Burg and his son Joe were eased out. (The old man, still alert and vigorous, consoled himself by inventing a new line of special clocks; he also became an ardent environmentalist.)

By the late 1960s "distrust permeated the atmosphere at Burgmaster," Holland reports, with upper management and shop-floor labor more adversaries than partners. What's striking about Holland's account is how deliberate management was in disrupting the cooperative atmosphere of the Burg years. The new style was a curious mixture, it seems, of condescension and ignorance. Even something as innocuous as the traditional Christmas dinner was discontinued. Since no other Houdaille division invited blue-collar workers to such an affair, managers ruled it should be disbanded at Burg. Workers were to be given a separate buffet luncheon on the last workday before Christmas.

The end of the Christmas party was symbolic of a corporate mindset that wanted nothing from its workforce except obedience. Because workmen were thought to have no advice to offer headquarters, headquarters never knew, for instance, that $50,000 was wasted on unneeded tools for a single machine. The operator of the machine would have told them, but he was never asked.

The conglomerate that once talked synergism became afraid to take risks. Houdaille bypassed its own proven design department to buy its way into the latest line of computer-controlled machines. Thus began the disastrous "Dualcenter" project. The author describes how millions of dollars were

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lost on a machine that was not only overdesigned but elicited a patent suit from a competitor. In 1975, the glitch-ridden machine was introduced. By that time, though, the division had slid from preeminence to mediocrity.

Of Kemp and Kravis

In 1978 Saltarelli and Vice President Phillip O'Reilly were approached by the two-year-old banking firm of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. Henry Kravis and Jerome Kohlberg, the principals, made a startling proposal: they wanted to buy Houdaille for $40 a share, or about $10 above the market price, in an LBO. Saltarelli was stunned. He thought he "knew it all," but he had never heard of an LBO.

He recovered sufficiently to hear what LBOs were all about. Investors headed by Kohlberg Kravis would put up a small percent of the bid price in cash and then, borrowing against the company's assets, would raise the rest from banks and from bonds sold to pension funds and insurance companies. The group would take the company private by purchasing all of the outstanding shares of stock. The new owners then would draw down the debt as quickly as possible by slashing costs and seizing upon the majesty of the U.S. tax code.

The tax code was central to the LBO. As Holland writes, "If a leveraged Houdaille remained sufficiently profitable, the annual value of the depreciation allowance, together with the tax write-off for interest payments, would effectively shield Houdaille from the 48 percent corporate tax rate for years. By the time a tax liability was unavoidable, it would be time to make Houdaille a publicly traded corporation once again. Much of the cash Houdaille would need to service its massive debt would be generated courtesy of a silent but consenting partner, Uncle Sam."

In essence, Kravis and Kohlberg proposed to break up the very organization that Saltarelli had pieced together just a decade before. The surviving company, they told him, would be taken public only as a smaller, leaner company, or, if the numbers worked out better, cut up and sold off in chunks. So much for the conglomerate sixties. Saltarelli consented in part because he wanted to retire. The LBO enabled him to walk away with $5 million in stock profits. (Saltarelli was scarcely underpaid as it was—he got $945,600 in salary and benefits in 1978 alone.)

So it came to pass that in May 1979 Houdaille Industries went private in a $355 million deal. As arranged, Kravis, Kohlberg, and George Roberts were assigned three of the five seats on the new board of directors, including that of chairman. In addition to the standard 1 percent fee for putting together the deal, KKR would receive large yearly fees for acting as management consultant and investment adviser to the reconstituted company.

"Something akin to what happened to Burgmaster when it was taken over by Houdaille would now happen to Houdaille," Holland states. Finance took over from management as the driving force of the organization. The new philosophy was to generate enough cash flow to take maximum advantage of tax depreciation allowances. Burg's machines were no longer an end but only a means to pay off the usurious debt.

Aside from tax writeoffs, the LBO strategy hinged on managing firms with an established share of the market and minimal competition. Despite its lagging technology, the Burg division had steady markets—customers who had stuck around since the family days. Yet the division was not prepared for the grueling competition of Japanese imports. In 1976, Japan's share of the high-end machine tool market was under 5 percent. By 1982, three years after the buyout, the Japanese share had rocketed to 60 percent.

The Asian challenge was nothing if not filled with irony. In 1970 Saltarelli had signed an agreement with Yamazaki Machinery to transfer some of the most advanced machine designs of the Burg division to Japan. A man who couldn't hatch new technology in his own company proved skilled at selling it abroad. If he gave any thought to where the selling of secrets might lead, he did his best to banish it from his mind, expressing delight to his colleagues that Japanese royalties would add to Houdaille's bottom line. It was another example of profits without production.

Fast forward to the 1980s. The very same company, Yamazaki, invades the American market with machines that improved on the Burg version at lower cost. Did Houdaille stand up and fight? Yes, in the hallways of Congress. O'Reilly hired Richard Copaken of Covington & Burling to represent the company in a trade petition.

An extraordinary sideshow followed, which Holland traces in minute detail. The Houdaille trade petition was, from first to last, a political petition, premeditated to spark a firestorm of abuse against Japan. Copaken alleged in documents that a cartel masterminded by the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry had decided to destroy Houdaille through unscrupulous subsidies and dumping. The lawyer constructed his "yellow-peril" case with utmost media savvy, putting together a video tape for special showings to reporters and congressmen.

Holland presents a portrait of Washington where trade policy is made only in reaction to partisan complaints, not according to any rational plan. Here we have Jack Kemp, the free-enterprise guru, lobbying the White House shamelessly on behalf of

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Houdaille. The company's Strippit division was located in his district and his association with the firm went back to the Saltarelli period. At the bottom of one letter to the Reagan trade representative, Kemp scribbled, "This is very important to me."

The trade flap obscured the crucial role of the moneymen in the deteriorating performance of the company. Kohlberg Kravis—and the young "whiz kids" they installed as managers at Burg—had no more concept of renewal than did the Washington establishment. Writes Holland, "Burgmaster was not being managed for the long term and not even for the short term. Rather, Burgmaster existed primarily to pay off a gamble."

Burg's reputation for quality was destroyed under the cash-hoarding policies of the KKR regime. Soon its machines left the factory packed with two-page lists of problems "to be fixed by field service." The division stopped paying its bills on time, often delaying payment for months. Employment was slashed mercilessly, and the machinists who remained called themselves "the mushrooms" because they were always kept in the dark.

The division's position was desperate by 1984. The company had lost the trade petition and, worse, was losing money. So in a final zigzag, Houdaille entered into talks with the same Japanese manufacturers it had publicly castigated in Washington. President O'Reilly thought he had reached an agreement to sell Burg to Okuma Machinery. But he was wrong; the Japanese didn't want a basket case.

On October 1, 1985 George Delaney, the plant manager, announced that the factory was shutting down. Symbolically, white- and blue-collar workers were told of the company's demise in separate meetings. A year later Houdaille Industries passed out of existence. Several of the divisions were sold to TI Group, a British conglomerate, and other pieces were "releveraged" in a company called IDEX corporation.

In telling the Burgmaster story, Max Holland helps to clarify the ongoing story of American deindustrialization. In particular he blows away the proposition, entertained seriously during the Reagan years, that Wall Street was about to share its profits with the people by revitalizing underperforming industries and generating the capital needed for balanced economic expansion.

At the center of this tale is another lesson—that skilled management is just that, management based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the engineering, manufacture, and marketing of a particular commodity. The kind of nuts-and-bolts mastery Fred Burg possessed is not something that can be bought or sold by financiers, and, in the wrong hands, it can easily slip away. □

Let Them Eat Sushi

Forget Japan. The way to make America great again is to be more like us.

by Tom Peters

In two issues of the *Harvard Business Review* last year, George Gilder, the supply-side maven, and Charles Ferguson, an MIT policy analyst, squared off over America's future. Gilder foresaw a new golden age if only our entrepreneurial spirit could be unfettered. Ferguson begged the powers that be to rein in the entrepreneurs via a higher capital gains tax and to provide incentives for sizeable Japanese-like consortia in vital markets.

At the same time, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* was at the top of the best-seller lists, predicting American decline unless we turn inward and trim our obligations to others. And

Tom Peters is a frequent contributor to the The Washington Monthly. *His latest book is* Thriving on Chaos.

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Joel Kotkin and Yoriko Kishimoto's *The Third Century* was predicting the opposite—a renaissance—if we absorb and nurture our new wave of immigrants, give up our fixation with copying Japan, and acknowledge the central role of entrepreneurial firms.

Now the battle lines are to be drawn again: More like them? More like us? Ira Magaziner, who co-authored *Minding America's Business: The Decline and Rise of the American Economy* with Harvard political economist Robert Reich in 1982, is back with *The Silent War: Inside the Global Business Battle Shaping America's Future*, co-authored with Mark Patinkin.* The message is more subtle this time, but still unmistakable—our survival depends on a more manipulative economic role for government.

The Silent War is arriving on the shelves at the same time as Jim Fallows's *More Like Us: Making America Great Again*.** Reporter Fallows one-upped the experts in 1981 with *National Defense*, which may well be the best book so far on America's crushing problems with defense management. Now he one-ups the anthropologists and sociologists, and perhaps the economists as well. Fallows's thesis: America's real talent lies in disorder and vitality.

"This can't be the moral"

Reading Magaziner and Patinkin is exhausting. The authors are tireless globe trotters, reporting from Korea, Japan, Germany, France, Sweden, Singapore, Ireland, Louisville, and Providence, Rhode Island. Each of the nine case studies, which form the core of the book, are based, it seems, on scores of trips and hundreds of interviews.

The studies track three distinct problems—competing with low-wage countries, competing with developed countries, and developing future technologies. They look at microwaves in Korea, computers in Singapore, tool-and-dye in Germany, optical wave guides in Japan, even ball-point pens in Rhode Island.

Many of the examples are striking. There is Korea's Samsung, which despite entering the microwave oven business just 10 years ago—when Japan was far ahead and the U.S. was still in the race—is now a $40 billion firm. Shut off from the relevant technology by the wary Japanese, the key to Samsung's rise was getting it instead from American companies.

And there's General Electric's attempt to make new refrigerator compressors competitive with those produced by the Japanese. GE went from scorn for, to despair over, its foreign counterparts, before finally opening a successful plant in rural Tennessee where displaced workers eager to retrain voluntarily undertook 50,000 hours of instruction in the newly required skills.

Or consider Corning Glass, which made a go of its foray into optical wave guides—an improved instrument for transmitting radar, radio waves, or phone calls—even though the U.S. government chose not to support the technology. The company ended up with big sales in Japan, the industry leader. The key was Corning's willingness to tailor its products to local markets.

The strength of *The Silent War* is the rich, highly believable reporting. The charge sheet against America's biggest outfits (the only ones considered in this book), while familiar, is correct and bears repeating: We remain all too complacent *vis-a-vis* our overseas competitors. We don't do much competitive analysis in general, and none when it comes to foreign competition. Magaziner and Patinkin report the frightful truth that at the height of its battle in refrigerator compressor technology, not one GE refrigeration engineer ever visited the Far East—and this was not 1955 or 1965, but the early 1980s. GE had some 30 engineers working on microwave ovens, while one Japanese competitor had 280. We are not obsessed with keeping the skills of our workers up to date, as our competitors are. And we are all too willing to chuck it all and go overseas. Corning's persistence in wave guides, or GE's in refrigeration, are rare exceptions.

When it comes to recommendations, the authors may be diving off the deep end in implying that government support in the exact style of Japan, Korea, or Germany is the key ingredient to success in the newly globalized economy. For example, they are maddeningly imprecise about how such support in the U.S. would cause our corporations to be more disposed toward exporting.

Furthermore, a person from Mars skimming this book might guess that the United States, which can apparently do nothing right, had a per capita income of about six cents and that U.S. productivity was a tiny fraction of Japan's. In fact, our per capita purchasing power remains far above Japan's; our overall productivity is still way ahead as well.

The reader from Mars would also conclude that the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) had made no mistakes in choosing which industries and companies to support or neglect. But numerous observers, such as Gilder and leading Japanese consultant Kenichi Ohmae, con-

* *The Silent War: Inside the Global Business Battle Shaping America's Business Future.* Ira Magaziner, Mark Patinkin. *Random House, $19.95.*

** *More Like Us: Making America Great Again.* James Fallows. *Little, Brown, $18.95.*

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tend that MITI's role has been highly overrated. Former federal budget director Charles Schultze put this view succinctly in an interview in *Harper*'s magazine a few years ago: "I don't think MITI really has much to do with Japan's success. . . . People seem to think that without an industrial policy, most of Japan's huge investment would have gone into industries like plastic toys, souvenirs, fisheries and kites. Well, it wouldn't have. It would have been invested pretty much where it has been."

Magaziner and Patinkin also seem to think the continued growth of our service industries is a de facto case for decline, even though service industry technology spending per employee is higher than manufacturing spending; what's more, service industries now drive most advanced manufacturing product development. For Corning, the turning point in optical wave guides was a big order by a sophisticated, entrepreneurial American service firm—MCI.

Finally, Magaziner and Patinkin appear to be nonplussed by any economic success beyond the U.S. border. According to them, Korea's growth is a cause for concern, not rejoicing. Likewise, Japan's high per capita income alarms them. So too does the slightest drop in America's market share in the world aircraft industry.

Magaziner and Patinkin call for shifting some defense spending to commercial spheres, programs to support the upgrading of worker skills, "surgical" trade responses (hitting the other guy precisely where it counts when an essential market appears closed to us), export financing support, sliding capital gains tax scales to encourage long-term investment, and an economic coordinating group "like the National Security Council." With the exception of the NSC for economics and the surgical trade strikes (a nice idea on paper, but the basis for perpetual protectionist escalation in practice), I have little problem with such a list.

My concern is with the implicit message: government as savior. This can't be the moral. If we took Magaziner and Patinkin at their word on this, then the American success stories they cover—each involving crucial *management* decisions—could teach us nothing.

The hobo jungle

Jim Fallows just wants us to be—or get back to being—our disorderly selves. "America will be in serious trouble if it becomes an ordinary country, with people stuck in customary, class-bound roles in life," he writes. "Other countries have tools—traditional, ethnic solidarity—to help them get by in those circumstances. We do not."

Fallows's concern, following a two-year stint in Japan and Malaysia, is unabashedly cultural: "In the long run, a society's strength depends on the way that ordinary people voluntarily behave. Ordinary people matter because there are so many of them. Voluntary behavior matters because it's too hard to supervise everyone all the time."

In two brilliant chapters, Fallows contrasts "the Japanese talent for order" with "the American talent for disorder." He could not be further from Magaziner and Patinkin: "America is not like Japan and can never be. . . . America's culture is America's greatest potential strength. Something about American values has enabled ordinary people, assembled haphazardly from around the world, to build the largest, richest, and freest economy in history. And to do so mainly through voluntary actions rather then state direction. . . . Japan is strong because each person knows his place. America is strong when people do *not* know their proper place and are free to invent new roles for themselves. . . . For better and for worse, this has always been a changeable, self-defining, let's-start-over culture in which people with talent, energy, or luck believe they can invent their own lives."

This is even reflected in our choice of heroes, Fallows asserts: "Most of our national myths are about people who won't listen to others and end up doing what supposedly can't be done. Benjamin Franklin moves to Philadelphia and succeeds; Abraham Lincoln is elected after countless defeats; the American colonies throw off the British. Chuck Yeager bends the Army's admission rules to get his chance to fly."

What is chipping away at American vitality, Fallows believes, is "an unnatural Confucian element" that began in the late nineteenth century when schools started to become the key to American mobility. "The quality that made for success in school—high IQ, the right study habits, good family background—became more and more closely linked with success in life," he observes. "This connection sounds obvious, commonsensical and unavoidable, but it is not any of those things, and it was not inevitable that schools should have taken on the role they now play."

Fallows writes: "Confucian societies are meant to be static. They honor the scholar, place great emphasis on credentials and academic degrees, teach children always to defer to parents and social inferiors to their superiors, and assign people very early in life to the rank that they will hold as adults. This package of values may be suitable for Japan, China and Korea [but] in America [it] is an unhealthful, alien influence."

Fallows saves his most extreme vitriol for IQ tests. He cites research indicating that the basic reason behind the tests is wrong. "Many men who'd been

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classified as 'subnormal' and 'morons' did fine on jobs demanding skill once they got the job," he writes.

He uses the example of the GI Bill to great effect. When it was proposed that the program apply to all veterans, the most prestigious members of the educational hierarchy were outraged: "Robert Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, warned in 1944 that when GI's came home, 'Colleges and universities will find themselves converted into educational hobo jungles.' In the same ungenerous spirit, James B. Conant, the president of Harvard, said in 1945 that the Bill was 'distressing' because it did not 'distinguish between those who can profit most by advanced education and those who cannot.' The Bill was clearly a scheme to push people beyond what their intelligence permitted. What Conant would have preferred...was a program restricted to a 'carefully selected number' of the most able veterans....But Conant and Hutchins could not have been more wrong about the GI's. When the 2.3 million veterans enrolled, they turned out to be phenomenally successful. Older, less flighty, more seriously motivated than ordinary students, the early GI Bill scholars became the most successful group of students American universities have ever seen."

The fastest-growing and most successful entrepreneurial firms have always known that background means little, Fallows contends. He quotes a 29-year-old vice president of Microsoft: "We have a lot of walk-on talent. We ask them to send us a program they've written, that they're proud of. One of our superstars here was a guy who literally walked in off the street. We talked him out of going to college and he's been here ever since."

Fallows has several national policy suggestions to deal with these stultifying cultural trends. First, shift the emphasis on public assistance from "entitlement" to "insurance." He criticizes Medicare and Social Security for "guaranteeing a subsidy to everyone, not just to the people who need the protection that an insurance system would offer."

Second, all welfare "should be tied to work. Just as everyone should be entitled to insurance against disaster but not to guaranteed subsidy, everyone should be expected to work in exchange for benefits paid for by other Americans...."

Fallows's third suggestion is the toughest to implement, "de-emphasizing credentials and eliminating Confucianism." The logic: "A modern society needs good schools. But modern Americans should not use schools as a filter, sorting people into categories early in life....The more that schooling matters, the harder it will be for anyone to overcome an initial handicap. The less that formal schooling matters, the more likely second chances become—and the harder people will try."

Finally, Fallows argues passionately that America should remain open to immigrants. "The disproportionate share of the ambitious people of the world...fighting for a chance to use their ambitions in the United States," he says, "are America's major advantage over other countries, especially Japan."

Except for a footnote in the middle of the book, Fallows never discusses industrial policy. Industrial policy, implicit or explicit, is the essence of the Magaziner and Patinkin book; culture never rears its head for them, no matter how indirectly. Why, then, review these two books together?

Because any American renaissance, economic or otherwise, will be built upon the strength of our people, their everyday actions and aspirations. To be sure, there is a great deal that our biggest companies have to learn that has little to do with culture. The deficiencies of our biggest corporations, which Magaziner and Patinkin chronicle so astutely, should be addressed with dispatch. But the underlying and unremitting theme of the Magaziner and Patinkin book is: "More like *them*." And that's probably a mistake, a tragic mistake from which we might not recover.

Fallows lays out a much more daunting challenge. He suggests that we do have something special, but in many respects we've been working to undermine that specialness for the best part of a century. It's true that American parents are still far more willing than Japanese or German to see their children engage in entrepreneurship. On the other hand, most American parents probably harbor a sneaking desire for their carefully nurtured young man or young woman to end up as an IBM marketer, a business school professor, or a lettered professional in the medical services.

While at work on this review, I was also conducting some research in Austin, Texas at 3M's new "breakaway" facility—the big, entrepreneurial company's first major move beyond St. Paul. 3M has stayed more vigorous than most of its giant-firm peers, and executive after executive explained why in terms that Fallows would find comforting. One said, "You get the chance from the outset to say what you want to say. You make your own career around here....The chances are unlimited." Of course, 3M is an anomaly among big outfits in America, but there are tens of thousands of would-be 3Ms sprouting up all over the United States, from the Rust Belt to the Asian- and Hispanic-founded entrepreneurial firms that are causing the economic surge in the Los Angeles Basin.

Yet, overall, we seem to be moving more in the direction of rigidity, not flexibility. Fallows is on to something—this is the real threat to American vitality, not our unwillingness to be "more like them."□

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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

Loyalties: A Son's Memoir. Carl Bernstein. *Simon & Schuster, $18.95.* Carl Bernstein's parents didn't approve when he left *The Washington Post* 12 years ago to write a book. In addition to garden-variety worries about a son giving up a prestigious and secure job was a more exotic concern: the book's subject was their own membership in the Communist party. Al and Sylvia Bernstein had never been completely forthcoming with Carl (or anyone else) about this aspect of their lives, even though its consequences—summonses before congressional committees, scandalous headlines, ostracism by neighbors—caused the family considerable pain.

Given his parents' continuing reluctance to air their dirty linen, Bernstein had two alternatives once he'd signed his book contract: he could be a good boy or he could write a good book. (A third alternative, not to write the book at all but to undertake a private investigation to satisfy his own legitimate curiosity, seems never to have occurred to him.) Judging from the muddled result, Bernstein, after much agonizing, finally chose to protect his parents and leave his readers out in the cold.

That's not to say that *Loyalties* lacks revelation. Bernstein writes movingly about growing up subversive: piling into the family car to escape the subpoena-server from the House Committee on Un-American Activities, sobbing hysterically after the Rosenbergs were executed (not so much out of altruism as out of fear that his own parents would meet the same fate). Young children are instinctive reactionaries, and Carl was no exception; he drove his parents crazy by serving as class air-raid warden and brandishing an "I Like Ike" button while his parents wondered whether to compromise and support Adlai Stevenson or back Vincent Hallinan of the Progressive party. Al and Sylvia refused their son's pleadings to join a country club, but after Carl wrote them an ugly note calling them "atheistic Jewish communists" they agreed to throw him a bar mitzvah. While Carl read from the Torah, FBI agents stood across the street writing down license numbers.

Bernstein's unresolved feelings about his parents' radicalism probably account for the book's maddening stream-of-consciousness structure, which fuzzes up even the simplest facts. It wasn't until I skimmed the book, after a thorough read, that I understood that Carl had two (I *think*) younger sisters. Crucial information appears in stray sentences inevitably attached to the wrong paragraphs, while Bernstein pads out the narrative with unilluminating excerpts from FBI files and with transcribed conversations with Bob Woodward and other friends about what he wants to accomplish with this book. (At its worst, *Loyalties* is a book about writing a book.)

One clear benefit of the chaotic narrative is that it enables Bernstein to cloud the issue he's most squeamish about: what role the Communist party played in his parents' lives.

The basic facts are these: Al, a young idealist and law-school dropout, came to Washington in 1937 to investigate railroad price-fixing for the Senate Commerce Committee. He quickly got involved in organizing for the United Federal Workers of America, a CIO-affiliated public employee union (later known as the Public Workers of America). Union activities drew Al into the world of the Washington Left, where he met and married Sylvia. When Al got a job working for the Office of Price Administration in San Francisco, the couple immersed themselves in west coast labor politics. The union leaders they met there belonged to the Communist party and badgered Al and Sylvia to join too.

This was a time when the alliance between the U.S. and Russia against Hitler had brought nationwide membership in the Communist party to an all-time peak of between 60,000 and 80,000 members. Al and Sylvia joined this tiny tide. According to Al, his membership was "half-assed" and he attended only a dozen meetings. Sylvia says joining was a way to demonstrate commitment to anti-fascism, the labor movement, and rights for blacks. When the couple returned to Washington, they did drift away from party politics, but Sylvia remained an underground member. Asked why she didn't quit outright, she says, "I would have been disloyal."

In 1947 Harry Truman caved in to political pressure and created loyalty boards allowing federal agencies to purge "subversives" in government. Al worked tirelessly defending union members. Bernstein convincingly portrays these labors as heroic; the

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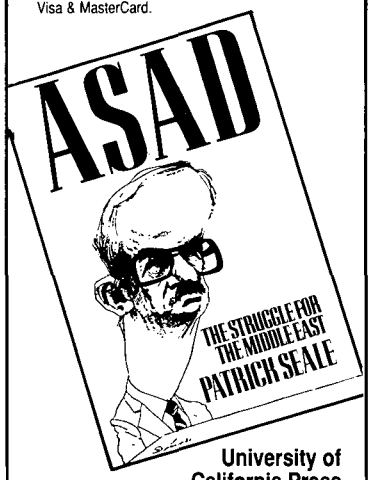

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loyalty boards *were* truly appalling. In many cases, the accuser was unknown not only to the accused but also to the boards themselves. The FBI would simply provide its (highly suspect) assurance that its information was reliable. But what if the process hadn't been corrupt? What if only real communists had been rooted out of government—would the firings then have been just? Purges of communists from government posed a tougher question than, say, purges from Hollywood. A communist screenwriter wasn't in much position to do his nation harm; a communist in government arguably might have been. It's not an issue Bernstein chooses to raise, let alone explore.

Al and Sylvia's own decision to join the Communist party cost them dearly—friends and relatives spurned them, and Al ended up in the laundry business for a time. But for all his investigative skills, Carl Bernstein is never able to tell us much about what it meant for his parents to be communists. Al in particular is exasperating on the subject, tirelessly evading all questions with his insistence that the party wasn't what mattered; the union was. "Once you admit affiliation," he complains, "you get into all that Stalinist crap." Bernstein answers that "Stalinist crap" is "a pretty legitimate subject for inquiry." But if this or any other challenge got him a more thorough answer, Bernstein doesn't share it with his readers. It's hard to see why he would want to.

—*Timothy Noah*

The Village of Waiting. George Packer. *Vintage, $8.95.* Soon after arriving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo in 1982, Packer had "the feeling of being trapped, vulnerable, in a place where nothing had any meaning and I had none to provide." Out in the village of Lavie, where he teaches English in a middle school, "each class met me with the same blank, puzzled, or amused stares." His own efforts—raising the level of English, helping promote latrines—seem to him practically worthless, though some readers will disagree. What Packer is good at is using an often novelistic approach to catch the paranoia of an isolated volunteer's life and the moral ambiguity of, say, "fairness." Is it fairer for an official to promote a well-qualified teacher than to promote a less-qualified friend when, as everyone knows, to fail to help a friend would be immoral, a betrayal? Packer has no solutions to the questions of African development, but his description of the problem is stark and loving.

—*Richard Lipez*

YEN! Japan's New Financial Empire and its Threat to America. Daniel Burstein. *Simon and Schuster, $19.95.* Most of the current debate on America's waning competitiveness and industrial dominance has centered on the loss of jobs in the auto, steel, and microchip industries. These losses are indeed troubling, but Burstein sees the loss of American competitiveness and dominance in the financial world as far more dangerous to long-range American interests. Capital will be the most important resource of the twenty-first century. The nation that controls this resource will have a great influence over world affairs, just as America did in the twentieth century.

—*Roger Baker*

The Men From the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America. Ray Raphael. *University of Nebraska Press, $19.95.* My family says a special prayer during Advent. If you repeat it 15 times each night, Jesus is supposed to grant you a special intention. When I was 11, I prayed that I would grow up to be the free safety for the Minnesota Vikings. I grew up instead with the body of Michael Dukakis.

Twenty years later I'm comfortable with the conclusion that Jesus did the right thing. But growing up with athletes as my role models, being too short and too slow to compete beyond Little League seemed like punishment for sins I didn't know I'd committed.

There was a certain cachet that accompanied playing Babe Ruth League baseball or playing high-school basketball, an acknowledgment of masculinity that was denied the president of the student council, the kid

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who just passed his driver's test, or the guy who helped support his family with a part-time job. The only feats that could win a guy similar prestige were having a great deal of sex (and talking about it) and drinking a great deal of beer.

Ours was an impoverished notion of what it meant to be a man, but in an economically depressed former mining town, it was all we were given to work with. One comfort of Raphael's insightful book is the discovery that we were not alone. None of the men he interviewed seemed to have a particularly well-developed idea of just what it is that separates the men from the boys.

We haven't killed our own food for centuries, so that can't be it. It takes fewer and fewer of us to defend hearth and home. And, of course, women now excel in fields once reserved for men alone. Progress, it seems, is the nemesis of masculinity. This may not be one of the major criticisms of progress, but it has left a generation of men struggling (too often in print) with their identity.

The identity problem, Raphael would have us believe, is most acute for the young man. A society that is unclear about its definition of masculinity is incapable of formulating rites through which a boy passes into manhood. Lacking such rituals, Raphael says, we grow up frightened of definition and duck commitments. The midlife crisis, Raphael says, is the working out, late in life, of problems once resolved by rituals of passage.

Devising and supervising these rituals was once a profoundly social affair. As Thomas A. Leemon observed in *The Rites of Passage in a Student Culture*, a 1972 book, such rituals placed "a difficult problem of personal growth into a social context."

But as ideas about masculinity evolved—not just bringing home the bacon but cooking it too—the consensus on what made a man dissolved. High school and college students were left to answer this question for themselves. Raphael believes that guys basically had two choices and that each was ultimately self-defeating.

The first is to devise our own highly individualized challenges, an approach Raphael likens to the vision quest practiced by various tribes of American Indians. Whereas the Indians rode into the desert seeking the sacred through fasting and prayer, Raphael's interview subjects—who seem disproportionately drawn from northern California's adventure-fitness culture—seize on a hobby at which they can excel.

"But the vision quest model," Raphael writes, "fails to provide any structural support to help us with our personal struggles and so it does little to ensure success in our difficult times of transition."

Worse than that, nobody cares when you succeed. Becoming the world's greatest rock-climbing, weightlifting guitarist impresses few people who aren't conversant with one of your mediums. The applause of your peers—something that used to be a part of rituals—is gone.

That's not true of the second path—athletics. The opportunity to win the admiration of one's peers is much greater in competitive sports. But the problem with competition, as Raphael points out, is that someone has to lose. In fact, when it came to making or not making the varsity, most of us had to lose.

I still nurse a small grudge against my high-school baseball coach, who wouldn't let me play in our scrimmages but neither would he cut me from the team. I kept showing up at the field every day hoping for my chance. I never got a uniform.

This was humiliating and not, to Raphael's mind, a successful rite of passage. But I have a different idea about that. On the bench I was more keenly aware than ever that my boyhood was over and my adult life was beginning.

Raphael undervalues the importance of losing. He wants society to do more to "ensure our success." This is a noble sentiment, but it seems to me it would produce generations of Donald Trumps and Dan Quayles, men on whom life appears to have left no marks. They are innocent of their own limitations and the rest of us are in danger because of this, just as we were in danger of the occasional cruelties of the big jocks in high school.

Failure is necessary because we must be chastened as well as strengthened, taught humility as well as confidence. St. Paul speaks of putting aside childish things, but most of us won't do so voluntarily. Failure provokes the epiphanies that force us to confront the future. It teaches us the principal lesson of any rite of passage: we are mortal, but we are not dead.

—Jim Naughton

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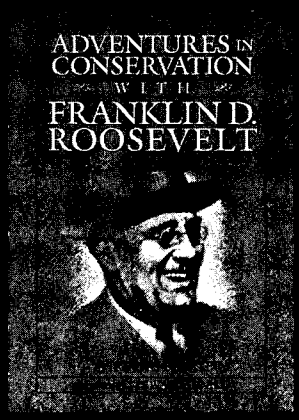

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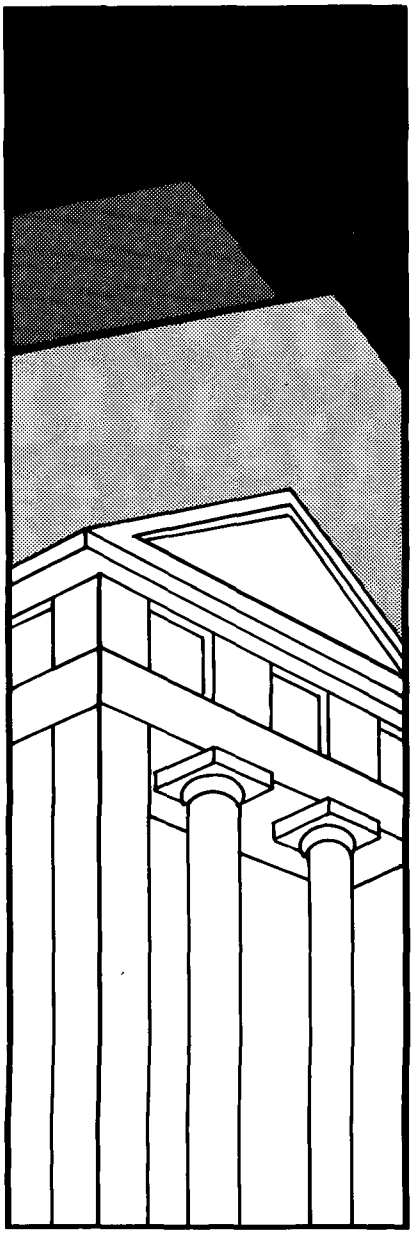

The Parnassus Fund is America's No. 1 growth fund for 1988 according to Lipper Analytical Services. Parnassus is a mutual fund that goes against the established wisdom of Wall Street by following a "contrarian" policy of investing in stocks that are out of favor with the financial community and, *therefore, undervalued. We hope to achieve above average returns when* these out-of-favor, but financially strong companies bounce back from adversity.

We also go against the established wisdom of Wall Street by investing only in companies that practice corporate social responsibility. We like to invest in companies that, for example, treat their employees well and recognize that environmental protection makes economic sense. We think you'll be proud to own the companies in the Parnassus Fund's portfolio.

If you're interested in learning more about the Parnassus Fund---the growth fund with the highest total return for 1988---call us at (800)999-3505. We'll send you back a free prospectus and other information about the Fund.

(800) 999-3505

THE PARNASSUS FUND

244 CALIFORNIA STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94111

☐ Please send me a free prospectus containing more complete information on the Parnassus Fund including sales charges, management fees and expenses. I will read it carefully before I invest or send money.

☐ Please send IRA information.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Daytime Phone: _____

Call (800) 999-3505

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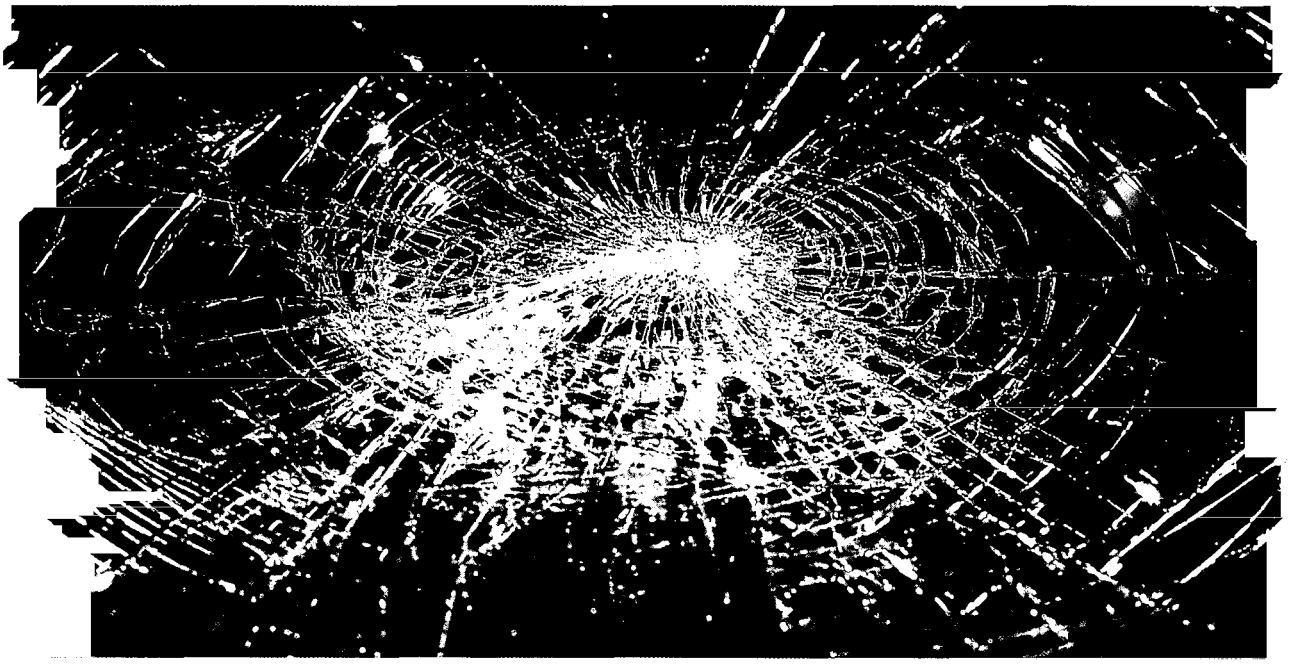
The difference between a shattered windshield and a shattered life.



On November 17, 1986, the car in which Tara Meyer was riding was in an accident. Unfortunately, she wasn't wearing her seat belt. So like 150,000 other victims each year, her head hit and shattered the windshield.

But unlike many of the others, Tara suffered no facial cuts or lacerations.

The difference?

A new idea developed by a group of Du Pont engineers. They believed that a thin layer of plastic along the inside of the windshield would keep the razor-sharp, shattered glass on the outside—away from the occupants.

Their idea helped make more than just a safer windshield... it made a difference.

And that's something we try to do in everything we do.

At Du Pont, we make the things that make a difference.

Better things for better living. DU PONT

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